

Snakebite AWAY Carpal Tunnel and Tendonitis Pain

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Courtesy of St. Luke's Health System, Sioux City, IA 51104 www.stlukes.org

How many of you remember giving your friend a "Snakebite" (or Indian burn) to cause them pain as a childhood or teenage prank? Or were you on the receiving end of getting this burning pain to your forearm from your brother or sister?

Let me tell you, this childhood prank is an awesome and very powerful musculoskeletal myofascial self-care technique that can be used to reverse, treat, and prevent one of the primary causes of Carpal Tunnel Syndrome and tendonitis pain, which is RESTRICTED FASCIAL MOBILITY of the forearm.

You can also reverse the symptoms (detailed below) of Carpal Tunnel Syndrome, Tennis elbow (lateral epicondylitis), wrist tendonitis, or Blackberry Thumb (DeQuervain's Tenosynovitis), which according to OSHA are the most rapidly growing category of OSHA recordable injuries and illnesses that are cumulative in nature.

In our highly computerized and technology-driven American culture, texting is a way of life, smartphones are always on and active, updating your status on facebook or twitter is a 24-hours a day communication method, and spending 4+ hours at a computer workstation or laptop is a daily way of life for your forearms, elbows, wrists, thumbs and hands. Most of these daily tasks are completed with a "high force pinching posture" that requires use of your fingertips (instead of your whole hand) and thereby increases the muscle tightness of the forearm muscles.

When your forearm muscles get stiff and tight overtime from repetitive and sustained use, the fascia, which surrounds all muscles and connective tissues, slowly compresses the blood vessels and nerves over time and increases their irritability—which may lead to increased muscle fatigue, numbness or tingling into your fingers, shooting or stabbing pains, dull achy throbbing pains when you pick things up, or you may notice a loss of grip strength.

- **In Dr. David Hunnicutt's WELCOA webinar entitled "Creating a Culture of Wellness" on April 16th, 2009, he noted that, "According to OSHA, finding solutions to the problems posed by ergonomic hazards may be one of the most significant workplace safety and health issues of the 21st Century workplace.**
- **Lower back musculoskeletal injuries such as sprain and strains, including Carpal Tunnel Syndrome and various tendon disorders (DeQuervain's Tenosynovitis or Blackberry Thumb, wrist tendonitis, and Tennis Elbow), are the most rapidly growing category of OSHA recordable cumulative trauma injuries and illnesses.**



In my 13+ years of treating patients from across the Siouxland area—and in St. Luke’s workers complaining of these types of pain after MSD injuries—I have seen amazing, and frankly, quite shocking outcomes and results with the Snakebite Technique. **The exiting news for you, your co-workers, family members, or your workplace is that within the very first Snakebite Technique, a worker’s grip strength improves, numbness or tingling symptoms into the fingers are reduced or abolished (got-ten rid of), and pain is greatly reduced immediately following only 1 session of the Snakebite Technique!** Most often, within one to two weeks over a total of 3 to 6 visits, the worker’s or patient’s symptoms are 85 to 100% resolved. Now, that is a mighty and powerful way that we can control our health care costs, improve productivity in our workplaces and restore our quality of life!

“Snakebite Self-Care Technique” process of care:

1. Have the person with the symptoms of pain or dysfunction detailed in this article hold their forearm with palm up, and you start by gripping both of your hands (right next to each other) around their wrist at the end of their forearm.
2. With both hands squeeze to compress the persons forearm, and slowly twist your hands away from each other, going in opposite directions, for 4 to 8 seconds, and repeat for 1 to 2 repetitions at the same location.
3. While you are doing this squeezing/ compressing and twisting of their forearm The Snakebite Technique (or Indian burn), have them slowly open and close their hand. This creates a muscle pumping action and helps the forearm muscles to relax, improving blood flow and taking any pressure and stress off of the nerves in the forearm.
4. Then move both your hands up the forearm and repeat again for 1 to 2 repetitions for 4 to 8 seconds with each “snakebite,” and keep repeating until you get to the elbow.
5. If you notice a more restricted or tight area of the forearm, you may want to complete 1 to 2 extra repetitions before moving up the forearm. Typically, you will complete 6 to 10 repetitions before you are finished.
6. I will also do this from the opposite side of the worker or patient’s forearm, with palm up, for any wrist, thumb or Carpal Tunnel symptoms of pain—OR if it is elbow tendonitis (Tennis elbow), then I repeat the same process starting with their palm down, so their elbow extensor muscles are facing up.
7. Perform the Snakebite Technique 2-3 times per week, or as needed based on their forearm muscle tightness.
8. Make sure to contact your physical therapist or primary care physician if you have any questions regarding this self-care technique, OR if it doesn’t get rid of your Carpal Tunnel or tendonitis symptoms of pain.

Who would have ever thought that a childhood prank, such as the Snakebite Technique, would be such a powerful manual therapy to quickly restore the ability to type, text, use your mouse, write with a pen or pencil, shake hands with a firm grip, drive your car, open jars of pasta sauce, and abolish numbness and tingling!

Get Snake-bit today, you and your body will be glad you did!

