

CUBITAL TUNNEL RELEASE AND VARIATIONS

Pathology	Ulnar neuropathy Typically compressive, may be stretch/subluxation
Causes	Design defect Tight cubital tunnel Acute trauma Chronic post traumatic deformity Elbow arthritis – degenerate, inflammatory Subluxing nerve – constitutional, post-operative
Surgical options	Splintage Decompression (in situ) Decompression plus partial medial epicondylectomy Decompression plus transposition <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Subcutaneous- Submuscular
Requirements	Hand set Ostetomes/bone nibbler
Objective	Decompression or stabilisation of the ulnar nerve preserving its blood supply
Technique	LA (decompression +/- partial medial epicondylectomy) GA Arm tourniquet Dorsomedial incision (can be 2-3 cm only) Preserve cutaneous nerve branch (?) Identify cubital canal Divide roof of tunnel Release proximally (ligament of Struthers?) Release into FCU 2-3 cm– nb fascial layer over the nerve Assess stability If unsure I perform partial medial epicondylectomy Partial medial epicondylectomy <ul style="list-style-type: none">Transverse over soft tissuesGet to bone and stick on boneRemove bone generously (osteotome/nibbler)NB medial collateral ligament attaches deep and distalThe nerve should sit comfortablyClose the soft tissues over the raw bone Transposition <ul style="list-style-type: none">Complete decompressionMobilise skin pocket widelyMobilise common flexor origin<ul style="list-style-type: none">FasciaPartialTotal

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Mobilise nerve forwards with blood supply
Check for distal and proximal tenting especially
Proximally – intermuscular septum
Distally – FCU: be prepared to divide at least one of
the ulnar nerve branches to FCU

Rehabilitation

Decompression/partial epicondylectomy
Gentle early mobilisation
Wound massage
Transposition
Above elbow POP 2 weeks
Gentle early mobilisation
Wound massage

Complications

Usual:
Infection
Nerve injury
Scar sensitivity
Stiffness

Particular:
Incomplete recovery
– the aim of the operation is to prevent progression of
symptoms
Instability
Recurrent symptoms