



Acton's Sidney Blanchette tries to prevent a loose ball from going out of bounds during a Halton Secondary School Athletic Association Tier II junior girls' basketball contest last Friday in the Bearcats' gymnasium against the Iroquois Ridge Trailblazers. The Bearcats kept the outcome in doubt through three quarters of play, but the 6-2 Trailblazers were relentless and kept Acton out of the win column this season after a 41-20 victory.

Photo by Eamonn Maher

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Q. I have had some tingling in my hands, worse when I wake up in the morning, is it carpal tunnel syndrome?

A. The Carpal Tunnel is a narrow tunnel in the wrist which houses the median nerve and muscle tendons. The median nerve controls sensation to the palm side of the hand. Occasionally the tunnel can become narrow as a result of swelling of the tendons and irritation of the median nerve. This can resulting pain, weakness and or numbness in the hand and the wrist. The symptoms of carpal tunnel include burning, tingling and numbness in the palm of the hand, especially the thumb, index and middle fingers. The symptoms are felt mainly at night initially as most of us sleep with our wrists flexed and can progress to tingling and weakness during the day as well as a lack of grip strength. Muscle wasting or atrophy of the hand muscles can also be a result in more chronic and untreated cases. Conservative treatment of carpal tunnel would include mobilization of any joints in the wrist and hand that may be stiff, stretching and massage of muscles that may be causing compression of the carpal tunnel and strengthening exercises to re-establish any strength losses may be utilized. Modalities such as a TENs or acupuncture can also be helpful for decreasing any pain. Your doctor or physiotherapist may also recommend the use of a night splints to decrease symptoms at night time and should also provide you with education on which activities you should avoid to decrease your symptoms. Diagnosis of carpal tunnel syndrome is made using a physical exam where sensation, strength and flexibility of the upper extremity is examined, other tests that can be utilized to aid in confirmation include X-rays (especially if trauma is in the history) and Nerve Conduction studies.

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SUSAN S. POWELL

Q. I separated from my husband last week and want a divorce. What is the best way to proceed?

A. There are 3 conditions under which you may seek a divorce: adultery, cruelty and having been separated for more than a year. It can be very difficult and expensive to make a claim for divorce due to adultery or cruelty. The majority of divorces are based on a claim of having been separated for one year or longer. In order to obtain a divorce an Application has to be made to the Superior Court of Ontario. In the Regional Municipality of Halton, the court is located in Milton.

Many married couples negotiate the terms of a Separation Agreement before proceeding to commence their divorce proceeding. The terms of the Separation Agreement might include custody/access, child and spousal support, special/extraordinary expenses (e.g. daycare/babysitting, uninsured health expenses, some activities, post secondary expenses) division of property, the sale or transfer of the matrimonial home, health benefits, life insurance and payment of debts among other issues.

Once you have negotiated the terms of a Separation Agreement you could then apply to the court for the divorce. This is called an "uncontested divorce" because all the other issues have been settled in the Separation Agreement and usually takes approximately 3-4 months. You will be unable to obtain a Divorce Order, however, until you have been separated for one year.

If you and your husband are unable to negotiate the terms of a Separation Agreement, then you may have to file an Application with the court and resolve matters with the assistance of the court. It is a longer process and much more expensive than negotiating a Separation Agreement. Mediation and collaborative law may assist with resolving difficult issues.

It is always important to understand your rights and obligations when you separate or are considering separating from a spouse. A consultation with a lawyer at this stage can be very important to also help you understand how you should proceed.

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