

ALWAYS MAINTAIN A HIGH INDEX OF SUSPICION!

COMPARTMENT SYNDROME: A Limb-Threatening Emergency

Who Gets It?

- Extremity Fractures: Open or Closed
- Direct Blow to Extremity
- Crush Mechanism
- Patients on Anticoagulation
- Reperfusion Injuries
- Tight Bandages/Dressings
- Burns

Warning Signs/Symptoms

- Significant Swelling
- Pain
- Increasing Pain Medication Needs
- Pain Out-of-Proportion to Injury
- Pain with Movement of Fingers/Toes
- Numbness/Tingling Nerves within Compartments (Figure 1&2)
- Motor Weakness
- Cooler Temperature of Extremity
- Beware of any Change in Exam

Common Associated Injuries

- Tibia Shaft Fractures
- Fractures about the Knee
- Both Bone Forearm Fractures
- Floating Knee/Elbow
- Males < 30 Years Old with Forearm & Tibia Fractures Most Common

What Should I Do?

- **Call your Orthopaedic Surgeon IMMEDIATELY- Emergent Operative Intervention Required**
- Loosen Circumferential Dressing
- Slight Elevation
- Hydration
- Avoid Hypotension
- Supplemental Oxygen

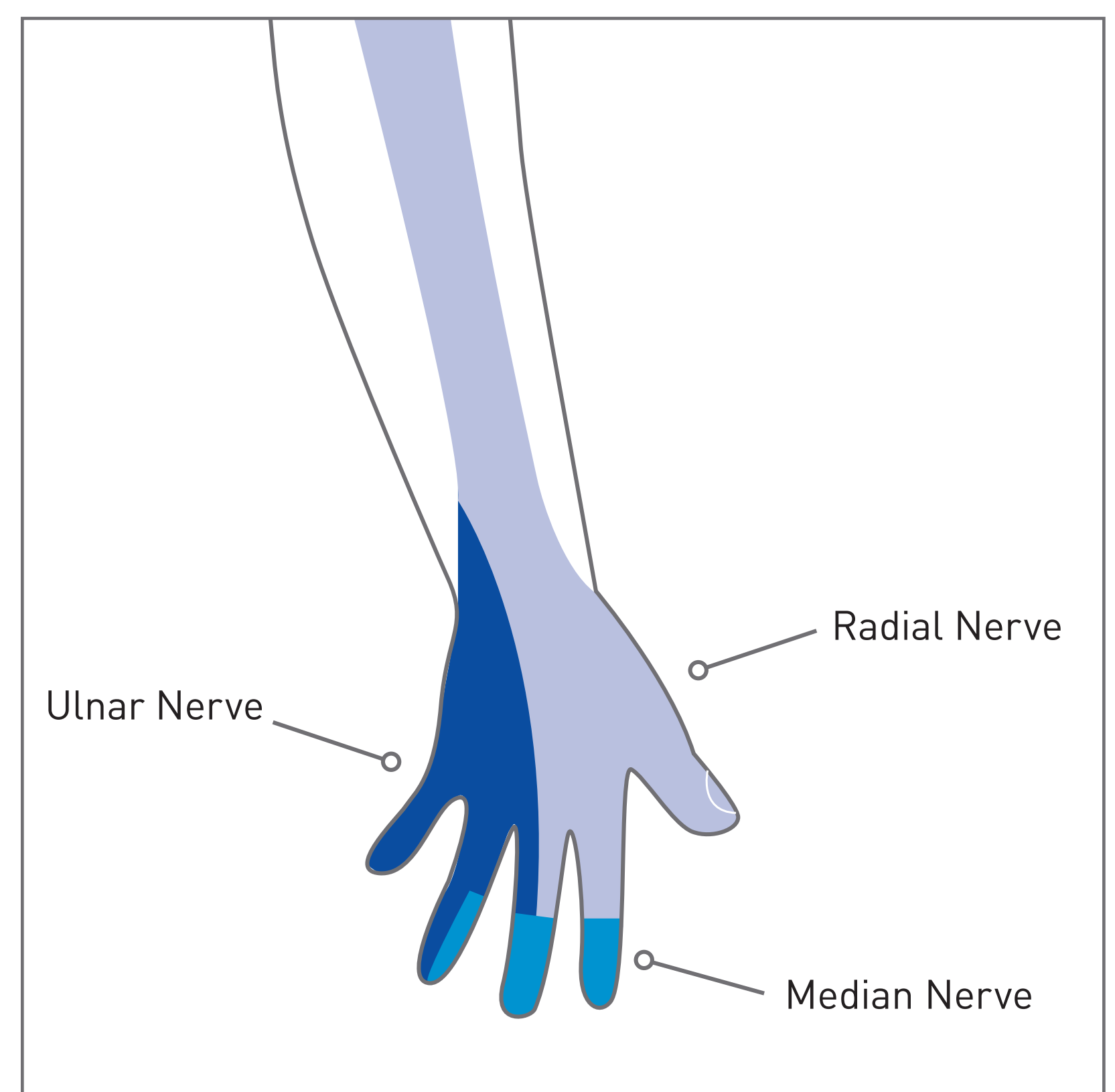


Figure 1 – Forearm

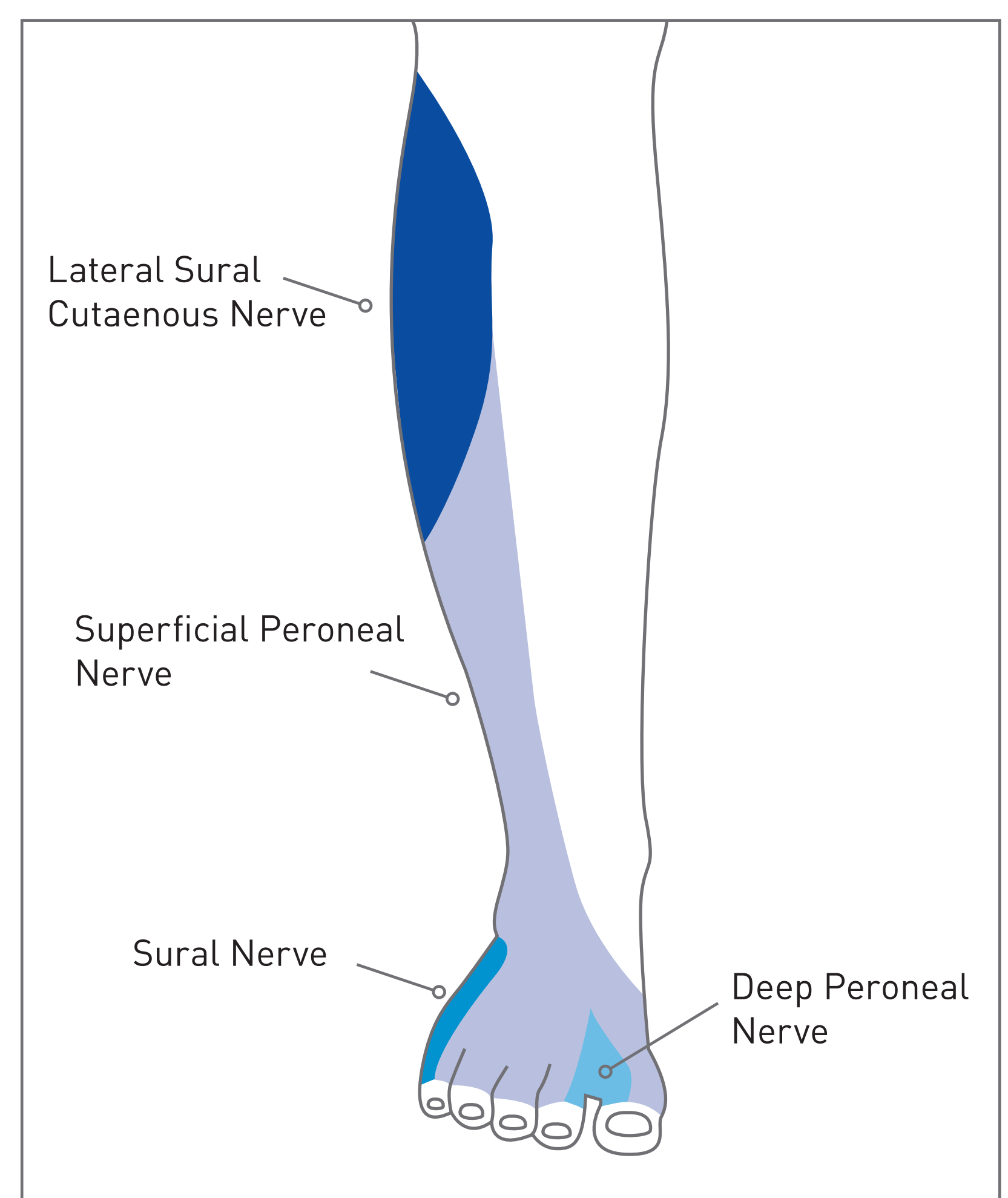


Figure 2 – Anterior Leg

The Orthopaedic Trauma Association presents this information as an educational service to the medical community. While the information is about health care issues and orthopaedic surgery, it is not medical advice. Individuals seeking specific orthopaedic advice or assistance for conditions such as these should contact an orthopaedic trauma surgeon through the Find a Surgeon program at www.ota.org.