

Patient information factsheet

Wrist fracture advice after an open reduction and internal fixation (ORIF)

We have given you this factsheet because you have had an operation called an open reduction and internal fixation (ORIF) to fix the broken distal radius bone in your wrist. Part of this operation involved fixing your wrist with a metal plate and some screws.

This factsheet offers advice on how to care for your wrist after having this operation and some exercises that you can do to help your wrist gently get moving again. We hope it will help to answer some of the questions you may have. If you have any further questions or concerns, please contact us using the details at the end of the factsheet.

Splint

After your cast is removed, we may give you a wrist support to wear for up to four weeks to help protect your wrist.

Pain relief

Taking pain relief medication can help control the pain and get your wrist moving. Speak to your GP or pharmacist if you have any questions about pain relief.

Scar massage

When your wound has completely healed, you can start to massage your scar. Massaging your scar can help to flatten and soften it. Unperfumed cream is ideal for massaging scars. You should massage across your scar line in circular movements. This movement makes sure that your scar does not stick to the underlying surface and helps the structures under your skin to move freely.

Swelling

If you have any swelling in your hand or wrist, elevate your hand above the level of your heart. Gentle massage and exercise will also help keep swelling to a minimum.

Function

We will advise when it is safe for you to start using your wrist for light everyday tasks, such as washing, dressing or eating.

When you will be able to return to work will depend on the type of work you do. If you have a desk-based job, it is likely that you will be able to get back to work quicker than if you do manual work. It is important that you avoid any heavy lifting or heavy manual work until we advise you that this is safe.

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We do not advise that you return to driving until at least six to eight weeks after the date of your surgery. You should only return to driving if you feel safe to do so and are in full control of the car. Speak to your insurance company for further information.

Exercises

The following exercises can be used to help improve the range of movement in your wrist and hand.

1. Rest your forearm on a table with your hand relaxed over the edge. Bend your wrist up and down.



2. Place your hand on the table, palm facing down. Keeping your fingers and wrist straight, slide your hand so that your fingers are pointing to the left and then slide your hand so your fingers are pointing to the right.

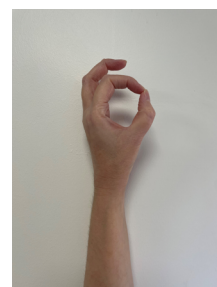
Tip: If you find this exercise difficult, try holding your forearm still with your other hand to prevent it from moving.



3. Tuck your forearm in by your side, with your elbow bent at a 90-degree angle. Turn your palm up towards the ceiling and then down towards the floor, keeping your elbow still.



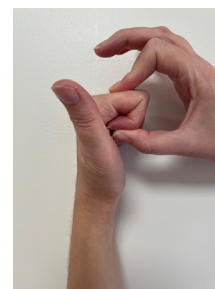
4. Touch each fingertip with your thumb in the shape of an 'O'. When touching your little fingertip, slide your thumb down your finger until you are touching your palm.



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5. Make a fist, then straighten your fingers.

Tip: If you find this exercise difficult, use your other hand to help make a fist.



Repeat _____ times every _____.

Contact us

If you have any further questions or concerns, please contact us.

Hand therapy team

Telephone: **023 8120 6459** (Monday to Friday, 8am to 5pm)

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