

## Patient information factsheet

# Wrist fracture advice – what to expect after your plaster is removed

It is normal for your wrist to feel stiff and weak when the plaster is removed. You may also have dry skin, swelling, pain and reduced movement. This factsheet offers advice on looking after your wrist once your plaster is removed and exercises that you can do to help your wrist recover. We hope this factsheet will help to answer some of the questions you may have.

### Skin care

Washing your wrist in warm water will help any dry skin to flake off. Use a simple, unperfumed moisturising cream to help improve your skin's condition. You can also gently massage moisturiser into any scars, once they are healed.

### Swelling

If you have any swelling, elevate your hand as much as possible. Gentle massage and exercise will also help keep swelling to a minimum. Avoid wearing jewellery on your swollen hand or wrist.

### Pain relief

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

### Function

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

You can return to driving only when you feel safe to do so and are in full control of the car. Speak to your insurance company for more information.

### Wrist support

Depending on your fracture, we may recommend you wear a wrist support for a short while after your cast is removed. This is to provide additional protection. If this is the case, we may advise you to remove this when performing your wrist exercises to limit stiffness.

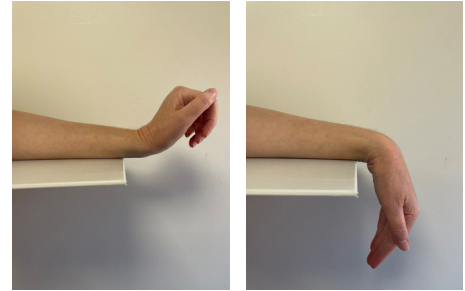
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## Exercises

Exercise is important to help improve your wrist movement and function. Exercise will also help to reduce stiffness and pain.

The following exercises can be used to help improve the range of movement in your wrist and hand. Aim to do each exercise **10 times every hour** (unless we advise you otherwise). If you have any concerns regarding your exercises, please discuss them with a member of our team.

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.

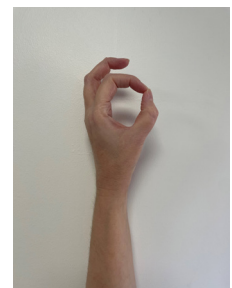
**Tip:** If you find this exercise difficult, try holding your forearm still with your other hand to prevent it from moving.



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.



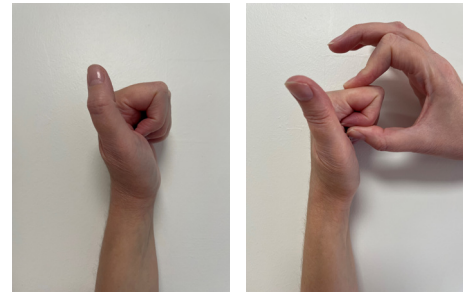
4. Touch each fingertip with your thumb in the shape of an 'O'. When touching your little fingertip, slide your thumb down your finger until you are touching your palm.



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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.



6. Bend the top two finger joints of your affected hand as far as is comfortable. Then using your opposite hand, press gently on your nails so that you feel a slight stretch. Then release, straightening your fingers fully.



## 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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