

Department of hand therapy

Fractured wrist – removal of a wrist cast

Information for patients, families and carers

Introduction

This leaflet provides advice and exercises to do now that you have had your cast removed and you can start using your wrist. If you have any questions about the information below please speak to the hand therapy team on 020 3311 0333.

What you can and can't do with your hand

It is very important that you try to start using your hand and wrist for light activities. At first you should expect your wrist to feel stiff and painful. This is normal because it has been kept still in the plaster cast. Your wrist will slowly improve with time.

You should avoid using your hand for heavy lifting or putting too much weight onto your hand until you have had a consultation with your hand therapist, which should be within a few weeks of your fracture clinic appointment.

Pain and swelling

It is normal to have some swelling within your wrist and hand at this time. If it is severe and is stopping you from moving your wrist and hand continue to raise your hand above heart level. Carrying out the exercises on page 2 will also help.

Basic painkillers such as paracetamol may help reduce pain but if you do not find this helps we recommend contacting your GP for advice.

Splint

You should have been given a removable splint when your cast was removed. Continue to wear this at night and for protection in busy environments, such as on public transport.

Exercises

It is important to start wrist exercises as soon as the cast is removed. By exercising and using your hand in normal activities, stiffness and discomfort will gradually disappear. We recommend that you complete the following exercises five times a day and repeat each exercise five times, but you can do more if you feel able to.



Rest your elbow on a table then move your wrist forwards and backwards as far as possible.

Rest your elbow on a table. Then 'wave' or tilt your hand one way and then the other.



Position your arm into your side with your elbow bent to 90 degrees. Then turn your palm upwards as far as you can and then down towards the floor.

If you are still having problems with moving your fingers, thumb, elbow or shoulder then we recommend you also complete the following exercises:



Straighten and then bend your elbow as far as possible.



Reach your hand above your head.



Place your hand behind your head.



Place your hand behind your back.



Straighten your fingers as much as possible. You should be able to fully straighten your fingers by this time.



Bend your fingers into a fist. You should be able to make a full fist by this time.



Start with your fingers straight, then bend the tips of your fingers, keeping the large joints straight, forming a 'hook'.



Bend your large knuckles as far as possible, keeping the rest of your fingers straight.



Touch the tip of each finger with your thumb.



Bend your thumb across your palm and then straighten your thumb.

Who do I contact for more information?

Fracture clinic appointments: 020 3312 3736 / 6778

Hand therapy: 020 3311 0333

Email: Therapies.Outpatients@imperial.nhs.uk

How do I make a comment about my visit?

We aim to provide the best possible service and staff will be happy to answer any of the questions you may have. If you have any **suggestions** or **comments** about your visit, please either speak to a member of staff or contact the patient advice and liaison service (**PALS**) on **020 3313 0088** (Charing Cross, Hammersmith and Queen Charlotte's & Chelsea hospitals), or **020 3312 7777** (St Mary's and Western Eye hospitals). You can also email PALS at **imperial.pals@nhs.net**. The PALS team will listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries and is often able to help solve problems on your behalf.

Alternatively, you may wish to express your concerns in **writing** to:

Complaints department
Fourth floor
Salton House
St Mary's Hospital
Praed Street
London W2 1NY

Alternative formats

This leaflet can be provided on request in large print or easy read, as a sound recording, in Braille, or in alternative languages. Please email the communications team:
imperial.patient.information@nhs.net

Wi-fi

We have a free wi-fi service for basic filtered browsing and a premium wi-fi service (requiring payment) at each of our five hospitals. Look for WiFiSPARK_FREE or WiFiSPARK_PREMIUM