



FRACTURE OF THE WRIST Following the removal of your cast

This advice sheet is a guideline only

Not all wrist fractures are the same, so listen to the advice that the medical staff give you.

The following problems are common following a fracture and immobilisation in a cast:

- Your skin may be dry and flaky.
- The wrist and hand may feel stiff and weak.
- At first the wrist may ache especially when you try to move it.
- It is not unusual for the hand to be swollen.

It may take 4 months to 1 year to regain full functional use of your hand and wrist. Your recovery will be helped by using the hand as much as possible for everyday activities, and performing daily exercises shown on this sheet. The following advice will help:

SKIN CARE

If your skin feels dry and flaky, wash the area with warm soapy water and then apply moisturiser.

SWELLING

Movement will help to reduce swelling, so try to use your hand as normally as possible starting with light activities and gradually increasing the work that you do. Elevating the arm will help i.e. raising the hand above the elbow, and the elbow above heart level. By performing exercise 8 in this position the pumping action of the muscles will reduce swelling. Gentle massage in the direction of the heart will also be beneficial.

BANDAGES

If you are given a crepe bandage, this should only be used for a short period i.e. the first week. Remove for exercise sessions. If you feel you need a support, ask your GP or Physio for advice.

DAILY ACTIVITIES

It is important to use the hand for everyday activities. At first it will feel weak and you won't be able to lift heavy objects. This should slowly improve with time as the muscles strengthen.

EXERCISES

The following exercises will help to improve movement, strength and function.

Perform each exercise as described.

Exercises should not cause pain, although an ache and exercise soreness are to be expected. Should pain and swelling occur, it may be that you are over exercising.

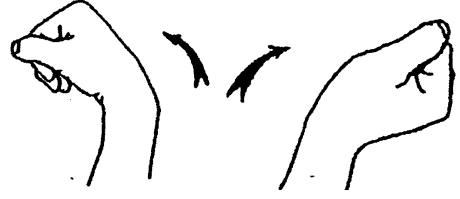
Rest with hand elevated, and if pain settles reduce the number of repetitions next time.

If pain persists for more than 48 hours seek medical advice.

PERFORM EXERCISES 3 – 4 TIMES DAILY

EXERCISE 1

With your forearm resting on a table, bend your wrist forwards and back as far as you can. Make sure this movement occurs at the wrist and not the arm.



Repeat 10 times each way

EXERCISE 2

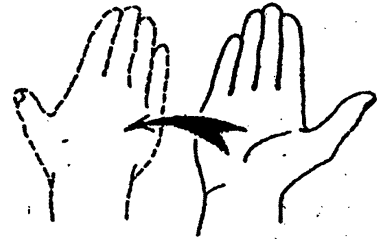
Place your palm flat on the table. Gently move your wrist from side to side as far as possible. Again, make sure the movement occurs at the wrist. You may have to hold the forearm still with your other hand.



Repeat 10 times each way

EXERCISE 3

Start with the forearm and hand flat on the table. Elbow bent. Try to get the back of the hand as flat as possible on the table. Turn your hand over to place the palm down, keeping the elbow still.



Repeat 10 times each way

EXERCISE 4

With your hand resting on the table, palm facing upwards. Lift your thumb up away from the palm as far as you can.



Repeat 10 times

EXERCISE 5

Touch your thumb to each fingertip in turn, starting at the index and working towards the little finger.



Repeat 5 times

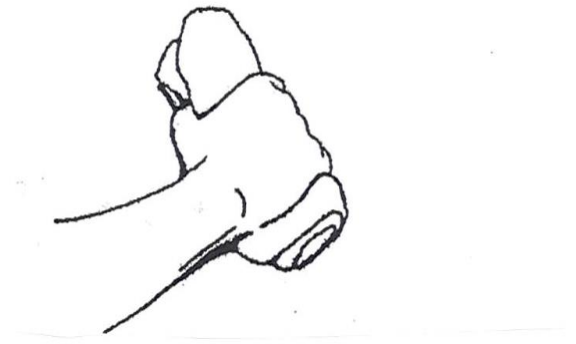
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EXERCISE 6

With the forearm resting on the table, squeeze a rolled facecloth.

Hold for 5 seconds

Repeat 10 times

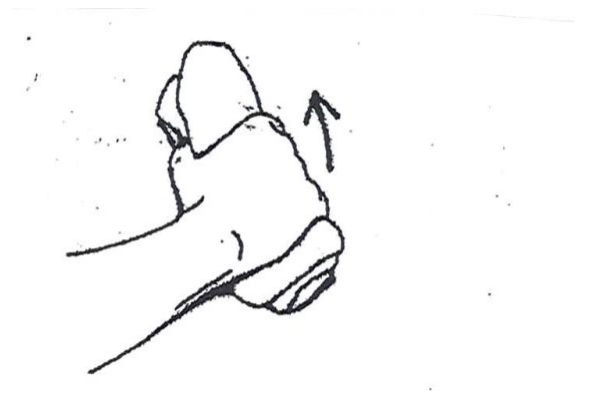


EXERCISE 7

Holding the cloth as above, lift the hand off the Table. Make sure the forearm stays in contact With the table.

Hold for a count of 5

Repeat 10 times

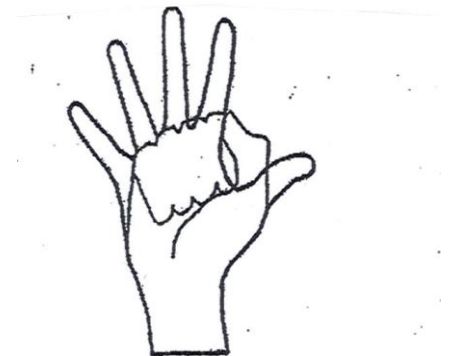


The above exercises should be performed 3 – 4times daily, If swelling is present, then perform the following Exercise each hour.

EXERCISE 8

Raise the hand and arm in the air. Make a fist and then stretch open the fingers as wide as possible.

Repeat 20 times



If you are not making the progress you expect after 2weeks, ask your GP for advice.

A physiotherapist/occupational therapist specialising in hand rehabilitation could help you progress.