

Advice for Patients Following a Wrist or Hand Injury / Fracture

Advice

- As soon as your plaster is removed you must try to use your hand and wrist as normally as possible, e.g. start with light activities such as washing up, dusting, eating and drinking. Avoid lifting heavy weights until you feel ready.
- You can expect some swelling initially when you start using it more, but this is normal. To reduce the swelling, elevate your hand when you are resting. It is normal to feel some discomfort.
- To get rid of dry skin, wash your hand and wrist in warm soapy water and then apply moisturiser, massaging from fingertips to elbow. This may need to be repeated several times in the first few days- you may find exercising in warm water will help to ease the discomfort initially.
- Straight after you have come out of plaster the physiotherapist might give you a brace to wear. You should take this brace off to do your exercises and you should aim to wear yourself off the brace in 2 to 3 weeks as advised by the physiotherapist.
- It is important that you exercise your hand little and often as your recovery will largely depend on this.

Exercises

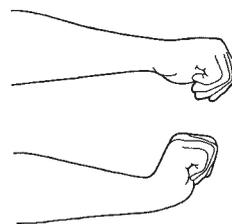
Remember exercise little and often - preferably every 1 to 2 hours, 5 or 10 times each.

The following exercises are aimed to decrease the stiffness.

1. Support your arm leaving the wrist free



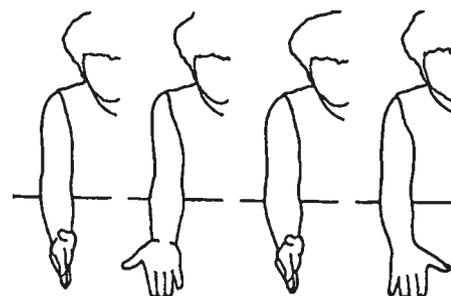
(e.g. over the edge of a table or an arm of a chair).



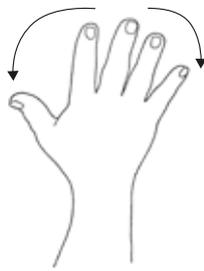
- bend hand up as far as possible.
- bend hand down as far as possible
- use your other hand to gently push into discomfort not pain

2. Making sure your elbow is by your side with elbow bent at a right angle

- tuck elbow in at your side
- turn your hand palm up
- turn hand palm down
- use your other hand to gently push into discomfort not pain



3. Rest hand flat on table, move wrist from side to side, keeping forearm still.



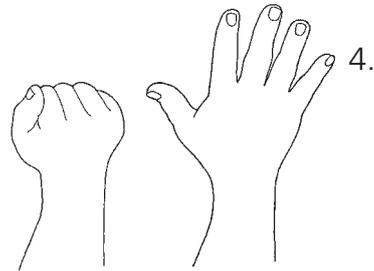
When the pain is decreasing but you are still limited by stiffness, progress onto the following exercises.

6. Place both palms together in front of you - try to keep them together whilst moving elbows up towards the ceiling, into a "praying" position.
7. Resting hand flat on table, gently raise elbow, putting weight through hand. Use both hands to push up from chair.

When your hand or grip feels weak try the following exercises.

8. Use a (sponge) ball or something similar like rolled up socks to squeeze.
9. As fig. 1, but use a clothes peg to squeeze between your thumb and index finger and each of the other fingers as able.
10. Practice picking up little objects like coins, buttons, pins etc.

Remember - Not using your injured hand is as harmful as falling on it again!



4. Make a tight fist then straighten your fingers

5. Touch the tip of your thumb to each of your fingertips and then to base of each finger.

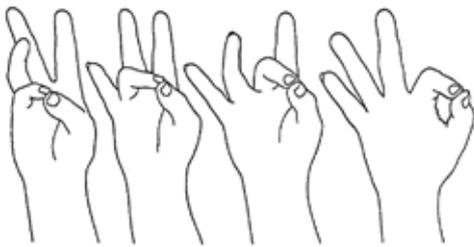


fig.1

The Trust cannot accept any responsibility for the accuracy of the information given if the leaflet is not used by RD&E staff undertaking procedures at the RD&E hospitals.

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