

**Trauma and Orthopaedics**

**Soft Tissue Injury – WRIST**

**Healing:** It can take up to 6 weeks for this injury to heal. Smoking will slow down your healing. We would advise that you stop smoking while you heal. Talk to your GP or go to [www.smokefree.nhs.uk](http://www.smokefree.nhs.uk) for more information.

# **Pain and Swelling**

# Your wrist may be swollen and you may have some pain. Taking pain medication and using ice or cold packs will help. You can use an ice pack or bag of frozen peas wrapped in a damp towel. Put this on your wrist for 15 minutes every few hours. Make sure the ice isn’t in direct contact with your skin.

# **Try to rest your wrist**, especially in the first 24-72 hours, and avoid any aggravating movements.

# **Exercise and activity:**

# It is important to start exercising as soon as possible. You will find pictures and instructions for your exercises on the next page. You should avoid lifting anything more than the weight of a cup of tea for the first 4 weeks. You can do light activities when your pain has settled.

# **Splint:**

# You may be given a splint to wear for comfort for a few days. You should remove it regularly to practice exercises as described below to avoid stiffness.

# **Follow up:**

# A follow up appointment is not normally needed for this injury. Please contact the Virtual Fracture Clinic if you are still experiencing pain and swelling from your injury after 6 weeks.

# **Any questions:**

# If you are concerned about your symptoms, are unable to follow this rehabilitation plan, please contact the Virtual Fracture Clinic.

# **Caring for your injury – week by week plan**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Weeks since injury** | **Plan** |
| **0 - 2** | √ Keep your arm elevated as much as possible to prevent swelling.  √ Move your fingers and thumb to prevent stiffness. |
| **2 - 4** | √ Take pain killers if necessary.  √ Continue regular exercises for your finger and thumb.  √ Use your hand normally for most light activities of daily living.  X Avoid heavy lifting tasks and contact sports.  X Do not drive if you are still using your splint and cannot grip the steering wheel fully. |
| **4-6** | √ The injury has healed. Swelling however can last for several months.  √ Gradually increase strengthening exercise and increase lifting using pain as a guide. |
| **6+** | X if you are still experiencing significant pain and swelling then please contact the Virtual Fracture Clinic for advice. |

# **Caring for your injury – Exercises 0 – 4 weeks**

# It is important to start gentle wrist exercises straight away to prevent stiffness. You will find pictures and instructions for your exercises below. Use your hand as normally as possible within the limitations of pain. This will not cause further damage but failure to do so may lead to ongoing stiffness.

# The following exercises should be performed slowly and regularly every 2-3 hours holding each stretch for 5-10 seconds. You can use your other hand to add gentle pressure at the end of movement, but do not force movement. Little and often (a few of each exercise every 2-3 hours) is better that doing lots of repetitions.

# **P:\Downloads\Flexion.Extension.Pronation.Supination.png**

# **Hand and wrist exercises**

# Starting with straight fingers, flex them into a loose fist. Initially pain, swelling and bruising will restrict movement. This is perfectly normal and to be expected. Work your way through the movements as shown in the picture above, ending with straight fingers again.

# **P:\Pictures\Hand exs.png**

# Touch each finger to the thumb. Do not force movement.

# **HAND AND FINGER EXERCISES**

# Make a fist and then stretch your fingers out.

**Caring for your injury – Exercises from 4 weeks**

**Strength**

Once the initial pain has settled, you can do some simple exercises to help increase strength. If these cause pain then wait until 4 weeks after your injury to start them.

Using a light weight (1/2 – 1kg), place your wrist over the edge of the table and practice wrist flexion and extension.Practice up to 3 times a day starting with 5 repetitions, increasing up to 10 as able.

strength exercises strength exercises strength exercises

Using a light weight (1/2 – 1kg), place wrist over the edge of the table palm facing down, then turn hand to face the palm up. Practice up to 3 times a day starting with 5 repetitions, increasing up to 10 as able.

strength exercises strength exercises

Using a light weight (1/2 – 1kg), place wrist sideways over the edge of the table. Tilt wrist up and down. Practice up to 3 times a day starting with 5 repetitions, increasing up to 10 as able.

strength exercises strength exercises strength exercises

# **Frequently Asked Questions**

**I’m concerned about my symptoms and/or I am struggling to return to exercise.**

Please contact the Virtual Fracture Clinic.

**I am struggling with my splint. What do I do?**

Contact the Virtual Fracture Clinic. We can give advice or make changes if needed.

**When can I start driving?**

You can return to driving when:

* You can move comfortably.
* You can control the vehicle safely.
* You are no longer using the splint or strapping.

Always test your ability to drive in a safe environment first.

**How can I get a certificate for work?**

You can get a fitness for work statement from your GP.

**How do I contact the Virtual Fracture Clinic?**

Call 01582 718121. Messages will be checked every morning Monday-Friday.

Email VFC@ldh.nhs.uk

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