

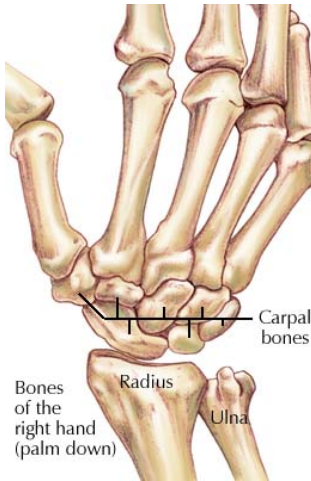
General advice following a wrist fracture

This leaflet will give you information about exercises and care of your wrist once you leave hospital.



Anatomy and function of the wrist joint

The wrist (radiocarpal) joint is between the forearm bones (radius and ulna) and the eight carpal bones of the hand.



Fractures and their treatment

Fractures can occur in any of these bones and treatment will vary depending on the location and type of fracture.

Surgery may be performed to wire, pin or plate the bones if fragments are displaced, followed by a period in a cast or splint. If surgery is not required a cast or splint may still be used for a period of time.

Pain

Fractures can be very painful. Your doctor will prescribe you painkillers and

taking these regularly, as advised, will help you to manage the pain. If your pain becomes severe or constant you should consult your GP.

Swelling

You may notice swelling in your arm, wrist or hand. Keeping your forearm elevated when at rest may help minimise this.

Ice is commonly used to reduce swelling. Use frozen peas or ice cubes wrapped in a damp tea towel, for up to 10 – 15 minutes, two or three times a day.

Stiffness

Regular movements of your arm will help limit any stiffness in your shoulder, elbow and fingers and will speed up your recovery.

Weakness

Due to muscle inactivity as your fracture heals, the hand and wrist may feel weak. You must not carry or lift loads unless instructed that it is safe to do so. Once the fracture is healed you can gradually start to increase the load again and exercises will be prescribed where appropriate.

Suggested exercises

The following exercises can be practiced up to four times each day, as pain allows. Stop if your pain increases.

1. Shoulder flexion



Raise your arm overhead as far as you can.

Repeat 10 times.

2. Elbow exercises



Bend and straighten your elbow as far as you can.

Repeat 10 times.

3. Hand exercises



Bend your wrist down as far as is comfortable, using your other hand to stretch into discomfort (not pain). Hold for five seconds.

Repeat 10 times.



Bend the wrist upwards as far as comfortable, using your other hand to stretch into discomfort (not pain). Hold for five seconds.

Repeat 10 times.



Keep your forearm still, and bend your wrist side to side as far as is comfortable.

Repeat 10 – 20 times



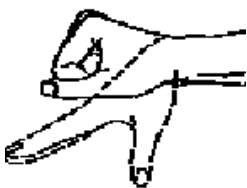
Rest your forearm on a table. Turn your palm upwards as far as you can, then turn it down towards the floor. Keep your upper arm still throughout.

Repeat 10 – 20 times



Make a big circle with your thumb in both directions

Repeat 10 – 20 times



Make a fist with your hand and then extend your fingers and thumb.

Repeat 10 – 20 times

Information

Contact us – If you have any questions about your rehabilitation, please contact Guy's physiotherapy department on **t:** 020 7188 5103, or St Thomas' physiotherapy department on **t:** 020 7188 5094 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm).

Pharmacy medicines helpline – For details about medicines that you have been prescribed at Guy's and St Thomas' hospitals, you can speak to staff caring for you or call our helpline. **t:** 020 7188 8748 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

Your comments and concerns – For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.
t: 020 7188 8801 (PALS)
e: pals@gstt.nhs.uk
t: 020 7188 3514 (complaints)
e: complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk

Language and accessible support services – If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch.
t: 020 7188 8815
e: languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk

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