

WRIST FRACTURE

What is a wrist fracture?

Your wrist is made up of eight bones. They attach to the bones in your forearm and the bones in your hand. A fracture is a break in a bone. When you break your wrist, you may have broken the ends of the forearm bones (radius or ulna) or one of the eight wrist bones.

How does it occur?

The usual causes of a wrist fracture are:

- a fall
- a direct blow to the wrist

What are the symptoms?

Your wrist is painful and swollen. When the navicular bone is fractured, the area below the thumb is tender.

How is it diagnosed?

Your healthcare provider will examine your wrist and review your symptoms. An X-ray of your wrist may show a fracture. Sometimes a fracture may not show up in the first X-ray and your healthcare provider may recommend that you have a repeat X-ray in 1 to 2 weeks.

How is it treated?

If the broken bone is crooked, your healthcare provider will straighten it. Your provider will give you medicine first so the straightening is not too painful.

You may be given a splint for your wrist for a few days until the swelling begins to go down. Then your wrist will be put in a cast for 4 to 8 weeks. Certain types of fractures may need to be in a cast longer and may eventually need surgery.

Your healthcare provider may prescribe anti-inflammatory medicines or other pain medicines (adults aged 65 years and older should not take non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medicine for more than 7 days without their healthcare provider's approval).

You should elevate your wrist on a pillow or the back of a chair as often as possible for the first 2 to 3 days. This will help control pain and swelling.

You may place ice packs over the cast for 20 to 30 minutes every 3 to 4 hours for the first 2 to 3 days. Take care not to get your cast wet if it is a plaster cast.

When can I return to my sport or activity?

The goal of rehabilitation is to return you to your sport or activity as soon as is safely possible. If you return too soon you may worsen your injury, which could lead to permanent damage. Everyone recovers from injury at a different rate. Return to your sport or activity will be determined by how soon your wrist recovers, not by how many days or weeks it has been since your injury occurred.

You may return to your sport or activity when you have full range of motion in your wrist without pain. Your healthcare provider may allow you to return to competition with your wrist taped or in a brace. Your injured wrist, hand, and forearm need to have the same strength as the uninjured side. You must not have any pain when you do activities such as swinging a bat or a racket or tumbling in gymnastics.

If you return to a sport or activity too soon after a wrist fracture there still could be problems with healing. It is very important to be sure that none of your activities cause wrist pain or tenderness.

When should I call my healthcare provider?

Call your healthcare provider if:

- your pain is getting worse instead of better
- you feel that your cast is too tight and you have swelling that doesn't get better when you elevate your injury

How can I prevent a wrist fracture?

Most wrist fractures are caused by accidents that you cannot easily prevent. However, when you do activities such as rollerblading, be sure to wear protective wrist guards.

WRIST FRACTURE REHABILITATION EXERCISES

Do these exercises as soon as your healthcare provider says you can.

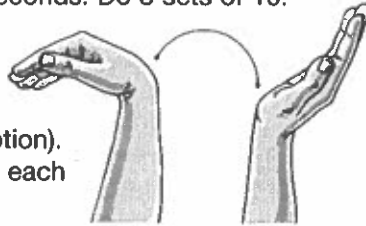
Stretching exercises

1. WRIST RANGE OF MOTION

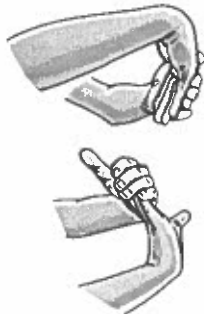
A. Flexion: Gently bend your wrist forward. Hold for 5 seconds. Do 3 sets of 10.

B. Extension: Gently bend your wrist backward. Hold this position 5 seconds. Do 3 sets of 10.

C. Side to side: Gently move your wrist from side to side (a handshake motion). Hold for 5 seconds at each end. Do 3 sets of 10.



WRIST ACTIVE RANGE OF MOTION



WRIST STRETCH

2. WRIST STRETCH: With one hand, help to bend the opposite wrist down by pressing the back of your hand and holding it down for 15 to 30 seconds. Next, stretch the hand back by pressing the fingers in a backward direction and holding it for 15 to 30 seconds. Keep your elbow straight during this exercise. Do 3 sets on each hand.

3. WRIST EXTENSION STRETCH: Stand at a table with your palms down, fingers flat, and elbows straight. Lean your body weight forward. Hold this position for 15 seconds. Repeat 3 times.



WRIST EXTENSION STRETCH



WRIST FLEXION STRETCH

4. WRIST FLEXION STRETCH: Stand with the back of your hands on a table, palms facing up, fingers pointing toward your body, and elbows straight. Lean away from the table. Hold this position for 15 to 30 seconds. Repeat 3 times.

5. FOREARM PRONATION AND SUPINATION: With your elbow bent 90°, turn your palm upward and hold for 5 seconds. Slowly turn your palm downward and hold for 5 seconds. Make sure you keep your elbow at your side and bent 90° throughout this exercise. Do 3 sets of 10.

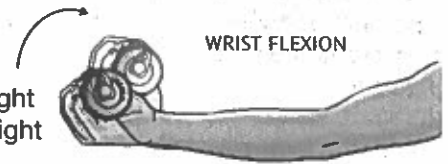


FOREARM PRONATION AND SUPINATION

When this exercise becomes pain free, do it with some weight in your hand such as a soup can or hammer handle.

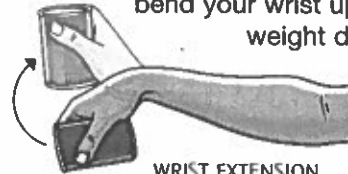
Strengthening exercises

5. WRIST FLEXION: Hold a can or hammer handle in your hand with your palm facing up. Bend your wrist upward. Slowly lower the weight and return to the starting position. Do 3 sets of 10. Gradually increase the weight of the can or weight you are holding.



WRIST FLEXION

6. WRIST EXTENSION: Hold a soup can or hammer handle in your hand with your palm facing down. Slowly bend your wrist upward. Slowly lower the weight down into the starting position. Do 3 sets of 10. Gradually increase the weight of the object you are holding.



WRIST EXTENSION

7. GRIP STRENGTHENING: Squeeze a rubber ball and hold for 5 seconds. Do 3 sets of 10.



GRIP STRENGTHENING