

Advice following a wrist or hand injury

You have sustained an injury to your hand/wrist. It may be a sprain or simple bruising. Here are some guidelines to help your recovery.

Sprains and bruising

Sprains usually take 2-3 weeks to recover but sometimes they may take up to 6 weeks to be completely comfortable.

It is important to control the swelling which will occur, so as to prevent stiffness. Elevating your arm is the most important way of doing this. Using a sling during the day and elevating on pillows at night will help.

To help support your hand/wrist you may have been given a splint to wear. If so, remember to remove it at night and replace it in the morning. Use the support for 7-10 days unless advised otherwise.

If your wrist has had a plaster cast applied you will not be able to move it, but you should still keep your elbow and fingers moving to stop them getting stiff.

DO NOT WEAR ANY RINGS UNTIL THE SWELLING HAS COMPLETELY GONE.

Movement and exercises

It is important to keep your arm, hand and fingers moving despite your injury; otherwise your hand will become stiff and painful. When you are doing these exercises you should not push through the pain.

Some general exercises are listed below, try to do some every hour although some may not be possible if you have a plaster cast on:

- Make a fist and then stretch the fingers straight 10 times.
- Touch the thumb to each fingertip in turn then slide the thumb down each finger 10 times.
- Bend the wrist forwards and backwards 10 times.
- Tuck the elbow into your side and turn the palm upwards and downwards 10 times.
- Practice squeezing a piece of sponge for 3 minutes.
- Use the hand as much as the pain allows, especially for things like eating & dressing.

If you have pain or discomfort, painkillers such as paracetamol or ibuprofen may help. Please consider asking for a prescription if you need something stronger than this.

If you have been given a sling:

Wear it during the day and take it off when you go to bed at night.

Make sure only your fingertips stick out beyond the edges of the fabric and do not allow your hand to hang down as this can cause pressure on the nerves in your wrist or affect the circulation in your hand.

While wearing the sling, take it off every 2 hours and gently exercise the joints of your fingers, wrist, elbow and shoulder to full stretch unless otherwise advised.

It is normal to get bruising extending into the fingers after a day or two. If your fingers become otherwise discoloured, you are unsure of anything, or your symptoms give you cause for concern you should contact:

- Emergency Department 01535 294481
- NHS 111 111, or 111.nhs.uk
- Your own GP

If your symptoms do not improve within 2 weeks from the time of injury you should contact the Emergency Department to be seen again, unless you already have an appointment in the clinic.

By telephoning, we can ensure you get appropriate advice and do not wait unnecessarily in the Emergency Department.

Notes:

Are you a victim of Domestic Violence? For confidential advice, contact:

Bradford	0808 2800 999	https://www.stayingput.uk.net/contact
North Yorkshire	03000 110 110	https://www.idas.org.uk/
Lancashire	0300 323 0085	https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/your-health-and-wellbeing/domestic-abuse/

If you require this leaflet in other languages or formats please telephone the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01535 294019

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