



Patient & Family Guide  
2020

# Exercises After Wrist Injury

Aussi disponible en français : *Exercices à faire  
après une blessure au poignet* (FF85-2160)



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# Exercises After Wrist Injury

After your cast and/or splint is taken off, you will likely feel some joint and soft tissue tightness in your affected wrist. You may have one or more of these wrist and hand symptoms:

- › pain and tenderness (often at night)
  - › swelling
  - › stiffness
  - › weakness
  - › skin changes, such as flaking skin, shininess, redness, or blanching (skin turns white)
  - › short-term changes in sensation (feeling)
- These symptoms may go on for several months. It is important that you keep doing your hand and wrist exercises even if you have these symptoms.
  - Always work within a pain level you can handle. It is important that you start using your hand within your comfort level to do normal daily activities.
  - **Do not try to lift anything heavy with your affected arm until movement and strength returns.** This often takes 4 to 6 weeks after your cast and/or splint is removed. If you had surgery, more healing time is often needed.

# Your exercise routine will include:

1. **Soaking** your wrist and hand in warm water for 15 minutes **before** you do your exercises. This will help to soothe any pain and make it easier to move.

It will also help soften flaky skin so it may be removed more easily. Skin lotion may also be used to help soften your skin.

Note: If you had surgery to repair the fracture, do not soak your wrist and hand until the skin has fully healed (the scabs have fallen off and the wound is dry). Instead, you can use a hot water bottle or a heating pad wrapped in a towel before doing your exercises.

2. **Range of motion and stretching exercises** to increase your wrist and hand movement (see page 4).
3. **Strengthening exercises** to improve how well your wrist and hand work (see page 13).
4. **Applying ice after exercise.** You can apply an ice pack or a bag of frozen vegetables over the wrist area for 10 to 15 minutes.

You can also apply ice additional times in the day to help with pain and swelling.

## Swelling

- Your wrist and hand may be swollen. This may last for months.
- The amount of swelling may change throughout the day.

### To lower swelling:

- › Raise your hand and wrist above the level of your heart when resting.
- › Bend your fingers often, 10 times every hour you are awake.
- › If you have been given a compression stocking, wear it during the day. Take it off at night and when you do your exercises.
- › Raise your hand and wrist at night by placing pillows under your arm.
- › Use ice.

## Stiffness

- Stiffness in your wrist and hand is common.
- Start moving your wrist and hand to get back motion in your joints.
- You may have discomfort when you first start the exercises. This will get better over time as your wrist and hand become more flexible.

# Range of motion exercises

Do these exercises 3 times a day.

## Exercise 1

### Flexion



Place your forearm on a table, palm down. Your arm should be placed so that your wrist is over the edge of the table. Bend your wrist down. Hold for 5 seconds.

Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.

## Exercise 2

### Extension



Place your forearm on a table, palm down. Your arm should be placed so that your wrist is over the edge of the table. Bend your wrist up. Hold for 5 seconds.

Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.

□ **Exercise 3**

**Radial deviation**

Place your forearm on a table, palm down. Move your hand towards your body.

Hold for 5 seconds.

Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.



□ **Exercise 4**

**Ulnar deviation**

Place your hand on a table, palm down. Move your hand away from your body.

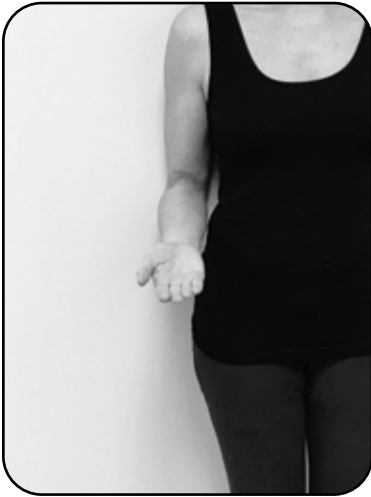
Hold for 5 seconds.

Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.



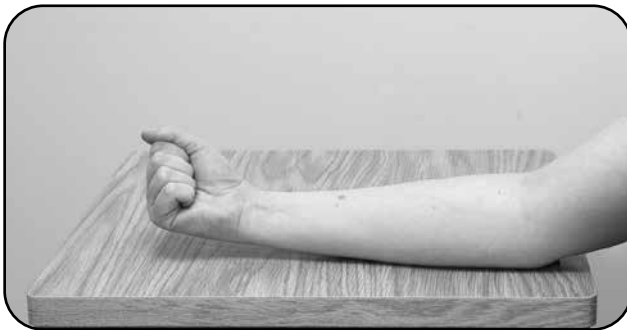
## □ Exercise 5

### Supination and pronation



Bend the elbow of your affected arm to 90 degrees. Keep your elbow at your side. Turn your palm up as far as you can. Hold for 5 seconds. Turn your palm down as far as you can toward the floor. Hold for 5 seconds.

Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.



Bend your fingers to make a fist. Hold for 5 seconds.

Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.

# Stretching exercises

Do these exercises 3 times a day.

## Exercise 6

### Flexion



Place your forearm on a table, palm down. Your arm should be placed so that your wrist is over the edge of the table. Use your other hand to push your affected wrist down over the edge of the table until you feel a mild to moderate stretch. Hold for 10 to 30 seconds.

Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.

## Exercise 7



With your hand on a table and your other hand on top, lower your elbow towards the floor until you feel a mild to moderate stretch. Hold for 10 to 30 seconds.

Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.



**Exercise 8**  
**Extension**



Place your forearm on a table, palm down. Your arm should be placed so that your wrist is over the edge of the table. Use your other hand to push your affected wrist up until you feel a mild to moderate stretch. Hold for 10 to 30 seconds.

Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.

**Exercise 9**



Place your hand on a table, palm down. Use your other hand to hold your hand down. Lift your elbow slowly off the table until you feel a mild to moderate stretch. Hold for 10 to 30 seconds.

Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.

**Exercise 10**  
**Extension**



With your palms together, bring your hands toward your body in a prayer position until you feel a mild to moderate stretch. Hold for 10 to 30 seconds.

Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.

**Exercise 11**  
**Radial deviation**



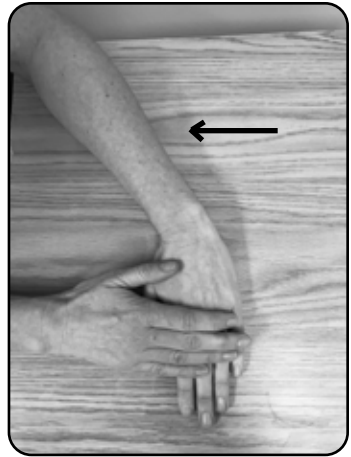
Place your hand on a table, palm down. Use your other hand to move your hand towards your body until you feel a mild to moderate stretch. Hold for 10 to 30 seconds.

Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.

**Exercise 12**  
**Radial deviation**

Place your hand on the table, palm down. Use your other hand on top to hold your hand down. Move your elbow towards your body so that there is movement at your wrist. Hold for 10 to 30 seconds.

Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.



**Exercise 13**  
**Ulnar deviation**



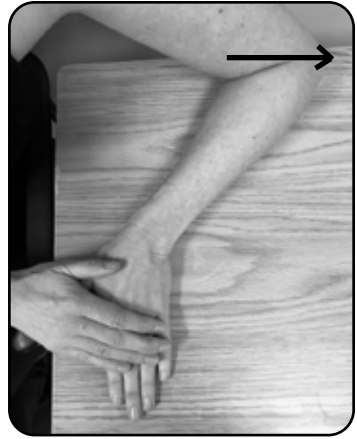
Place your forearm on a table, palm down. Use your other hand to move your hand away from your body until you feel a mild to moderate stretch. Hold for 10 to 30 seconds.

Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.

**Exercise 14**  
**Ulnar deviation**

Place your hand on a table, palm down. Use your other hand on top to hold your hand down. Move your elbow away from your body so that there is movement at your wrist. Hold for 10 to 30 seconds.

Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.



**Exercise 15**  
**Supination**



Bend the elbow of your affected arm to 90 degrees. Keep your elbow at your side. Place your other hand on your wrist and turn your palm up as far as you can until you feel a mild to moderate stretch. Hold for 10 to 30 seconds.

Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.

## □ Exercise 16

### Pronation

Bend the elbow of your affected arm to 90 degrees. Keep your elbow at your side.

Place your other hand on your wrist and turn your palm down as

far as you can until you feel a mild to moderate stretch. Hold for 10 to 30 seconds.

Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.



## □ Exercise 17

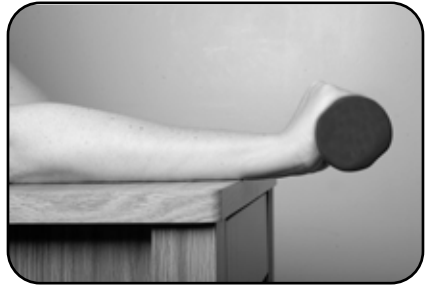


Make a fist with your affected hand. Use your other hand to squeeze your fingers tighter. Hold for 10 to 30 seconds.

Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.

# Strengthening exercises

## Exercise 18



With your forearm on a table and your palm down, hold a small weight or can. Lift your hand up, bending at your wrist. Hold for 5 seconds.

Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.

## Exercise 19



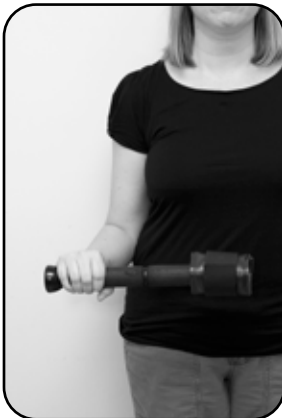
With your forearm on a table and your palm up, hold a small weight. Lift your hand up, bending at the wrist. Hold for 5 seconds.

Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.



## □ Exercise 20

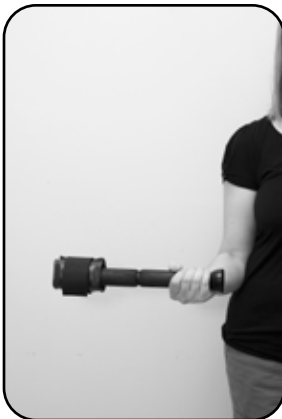
Bend your elbow and keep it at your side. Hold the end of a long object (like a mallet, meat tenderizer, hammer, or wrench) in your hand and start in the upright position.



Move the object slowly like a windshield wiper so that your palm faces down — keep your elbow at your side.

Bring your hand back to an upright position.

Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.



Move the object slowly like a windshield wiper so that your palm faces up – keep your elbow at your side.

Bring your hand back to an upright position.

Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.

## □ Exercise 21



Squeeze putty or a soft rubber ball in your affected hand. Hold for 5 seconds.

Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.

## Helpful activities

You will want to return to normal activities as soon as you can. Some activities can be challenging because you need good muscle control of your wrist and hand.

It is important to increase your activity level gradually over time.

**The following activities can help with your recovery:**

- › washing dishes
- › hobbies using your hands
- › writing and computer work (typing)
- › turning doorknobs
- › Playdoh® or clay – roll into tubes, shape into small balls







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Learn about other programs and services in your community: call 211 or visit <http://ns.211.ca>

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*Prepared by: Physiotherapy*

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The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.