

Advice for patients following Wrist & Hand Injury

Physiotherapy and Emergency Departments

You have recently injured your hand/wrist. In the early stages, it is important to rest and support your hand/wrist. You may be provided with a splint if your movement is very restricted.

In the first 24–48 hours, you may experience a lot of pain and swelling. During this time, to help the pain and keep the swelling down, you should:

1. Apply ice 4 times a day by either:
 - Wrapping an ice cube in a damp cloth and rubbing over the injured area for approximately 5 minutes
 - Getting a basin of cold water (with ice cubes in it) and a basin of warm water. Place your hand into the basin of cold water for 1 minute and then into the warm water for 1 minute. Repeat this 3 times.
 - Apply ice 4 times a day by either:
2. Take painkillers such as paracetamol to help the pain, or anti-inflammatory tablets to help reduce swelling.

Exercises

As the pain settles (it should ease within 48-72 hours), you can start to do some gentle exercises to prevent your hand/wrist from getting stiff.

- Make a full fist with all your fingers and then open the fingers out as wide as you can.
- Bring your thumb across to touch your little finger and then stretch it back out again.
- Bend your wrist down and then bring it back up as far as you can.
- Keep your elbow tucked in by your side and turn the palm of your hand up to face the ceiling and then turn it down to the floor.

Each exercise should be done approximately 10 times, 4 times a day.

Do not do any heavy lifting with your hand/wrist until advised to do so by your physiotherapist, as this will only make it worse.