

Care of your Broken Wrist (distal radius fracture) while in cast (Otago)

Note: not all wrist fractures are the same. Please follow any other advice you have been given by your therapist or doctor.

Bone Healing

You have broken the end of your radius – one of the long bones in the forearm that is part of the wrist joint.

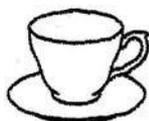
To protect the break while it is healing your wrist has been put into a cast.

For the first two weeks it is important to rest your injured arm, but after two weeks your injured arm should start being part of your everyday life again.

This information sheet will give you advice on **what to do** and **what not to do**.

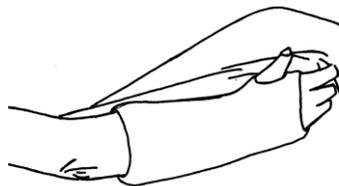
Everyday activities

- **Do** use your hand for light things.
- **Don't** lift anything heavier than a teacup.



Swelling

Elevate your arm at rest, with the elbow straight and thumb up. Gentle exercises (on the back of this information sheet) will also help with swelling.



General fitness

Keep up your general fitness by going for regular walks.



Pain relief

Your hand has a lot of nerve endings and can become very sensitive. It is important that your hand is not sore all the time. If your pain relief is not working please see your GP or contact the hospital.

Hand awareness

To keep your hand feeling normal, run your hand through your hair or count up coins (using your injured hand) with your eyes closed.



Close your eyes and imagine you are using your hand for your normal work or everyday activities, like basketball players mentally practise shooting baskets.

Care of your cast

A white plaster-of-paris cast takes 24 hours to dry. A coloured fibreglass cast takes 20 minutes to dry. Your cast is **not water proof**. Wrap your cast with a towel and cover with a plastic bag to shower.

Do not push or poke anything down your cast – this can bunch up the padding and cause pressure on your skin. **Do not** chip, crush, cut or break your cast.

You are advised **not** to play sport while you are in the cast or splint. You are advised **not** to drive any vehicle or motorbike while in a cast or splint, unless you have your insurance company's approval.

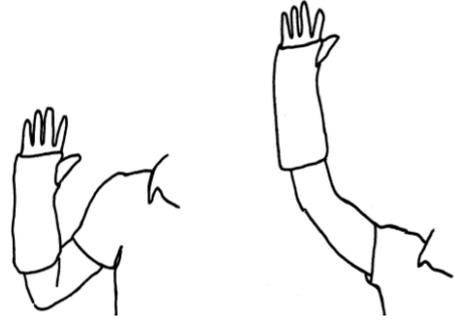
For any **problems**, please contact your nearest **Fracture Clinic between the hours of 8.30am - 5.00pm Mon-Fri** or the **Emergency Department (out of hours)** and arrange a time to be seen.

Exercises

While your cast is on carry out the following exercises every hour

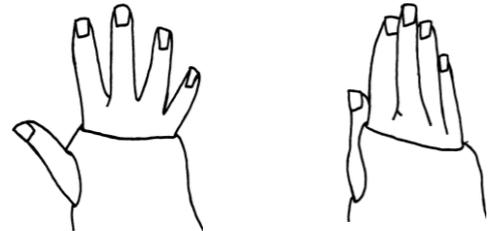
- 1) **Arm over head** – ‘reach for the sky’.

Repeat five times



- 2) **Finger pump** – spread your fingers apart and squeeze together.

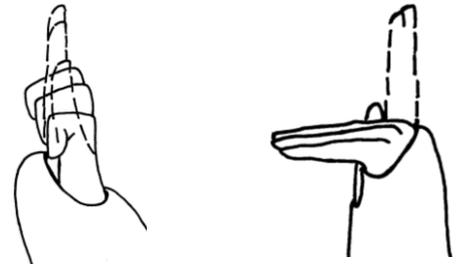
Repeat 10 times



- 3) **Hook fist** – bend the tips of your fingers only

- 4) **Table top** – make a table top, squeeze your fingers together, and straighten.

Repeat 10 Times



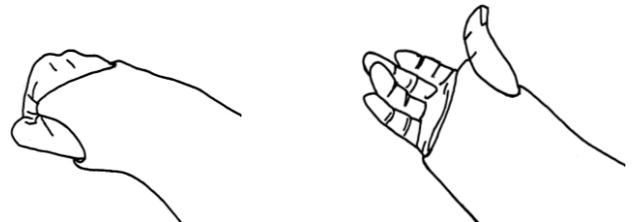
- 5) **Thumb circles** – slow and smooth

Repeat five times



- 6) **Rotate** your palm up. Keep your elbow still and your shoulders straight.

Repeat five times



Please contact the Fracture Clinic or Emergency Department if you have **any concerns** or are **experiencing any of the following**:

Your plaster feels too tight or too loose or is rubbing.

Your plaster is broken, cracked or soft.

Your plaster is damp or wet.

You have dropped an object down inside your cast.

Your fingers go blue or white and feel cold.

You have numbness, tingling or pins and needles in your hand or fingers that goes on for more than six hours.

You have increased swelling or pain in your hand.

You have a burning sensation under the cast.

You have symptoms of infection such as (1) a fever, (2) a foul odour from the cast or (3) unusual pain.