

Wrist cast care and exercises



Summary points to remember:

- These exercises can be performed while wearing a plaster cast or splint
- This brochure provides some information to assist with the management and rehabilitation of your injury. While it contains the recommended information, it does not contain all available information about your injury and is not a substitute for specific advice from the Virtual Fracture Clinic in respect of your injury
- All treatment options have risks and benefits
- If you have any concerns about the progress of your rehabilitation, contact the Virtual Fracture Clinic promptly
- Do not continue the exercises in the brochure if:
 - You experience increasing pain (some discomfort is common)
 - Your condition has deteriorated in any way since you last consulted the Virtual Fracture Clinic
 - You have a new injury or condition and have not consulted the Virtual Fracture Clinic about it
- This information is only designed for patients who are currently being treated by the Virtual Fracture Clinic at the Royal Melbourne Hospital (the RMH)
- If you do not understand the information seek clarification from the Virtual Fracture Clinic
- Patients should be aware that the suggested management is not guaranteed to provide any improvement in your condition
- Keep this brochure as you may need to read it again

Virtual Fracture Clinic

The Virtual Fracture Clinic is part of the orthopaedic department at the RMH. The clinic manages patients with simple fractures and injuries, often without the need to see a doctor in person.

The exercises in this brochure are part of the rehabilitation for your injury.

Helpful hints

Control swelling by keeping your arm elevated

It is normal to have some swelling in your hand and fingers. If your fingers are swollen, sit for 15 to 30 minutes with your arm elevated (see photo to the right). Wiggle your fingers.

Use an ice pack

Place the ice over the back of the wrist or fingers. This can help with any pain, swelling and itching.

Place the ice pack over your cast to cool the area but do not get the cast wet.



Rest

Your arm may become swollen if you use it too much. It is important to spend time resting, especially for the first few days after a fracture.

Avoid vigorous exercise to minimise sweating under the cast.

Medication

It is normal for your hand to be moderately sore for a few days to a few weeks. Simple medication such as paracetamol or anti-inflammatory drugs may help to control your pain.

Speak with your General Practitioner (GP, also called your local doctor or family doctor) or pharmacist about your medication options.

Keep the cast clean and dry

A wet cast can cause damage to the skin. The cast may become wet from water or excessive sweating under the cast.

Cover your plaster with a plastic bag and tape up tightly while bathing. Do not immerse the arm in the bath or hold it under the shower.

If the cast does become wet, contact the Virtual Fracture Clinic.

Never put anything inside the cast

Although the arm can get itchy you should never stick things into the cast to scratch as it could damage your skin.

Cooling your cast with an ice pack can help with itching

Rehabilitation exercises

With your cast (or splint) on, perform these exercises **four times a day**:

- Bend your fingers down to touch the cast (like making a fist) then open your hand out wide. Repeat 20 times. You should be able to touch your finger tips to the cast in one to two days



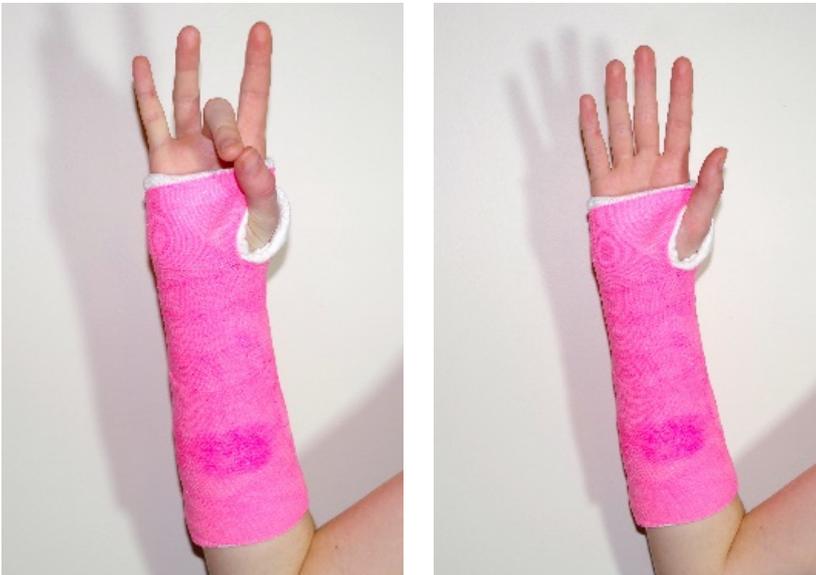
- Curl your fingers bending all the knuckles then straighten. Repeat 10 times



- Bend your fingers forward from the knuckles, like a duck bill, then straighten. Repeat 10 times



- Touch your thumb tip to each fingertip, then open to start position. Repeat 10 times



- Bend your thumb forward to touch the cast, then open it out wide again. Repeat 10 times



- Bend and straighten your elbow. Use your good arm to help, if needed. Repeat 10 times



Contact

Virtual Fracture Clinic
0427 892 421

Practitioner / Patient notes

