

INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

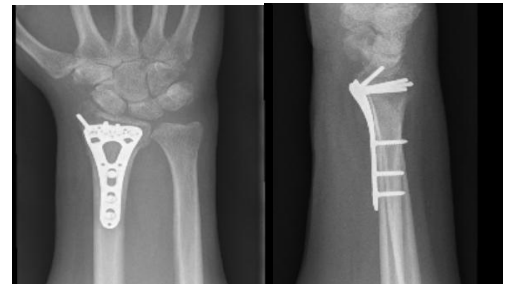
Hand Therapy

Wrist fracture – after surgery

Why did I need an operation?

Many wrist fractures do not require surgery to fix them. However, some patients need an operation to ensure that the fracture is in a good position for the best recovery possible.

One method is called an open reduction internal fixation (ORIF). This means the fracture will be held in place with a metal plate and screws to allow healing to occur.



Immediately after your operation:

- **Pain.** It may be painful following your operation; therefore, it is advisable to take regular pain relief. You may want to speak to your doctor or pharmacist about this and whether your regular medication will be affected.
- **Swelling.** You may experience some swelling after the operation, so ideally keep your arm elevated to help with this.
- **Sling.** You may be given a sling following surgery. You can use this during the day, but it is important to take it off regularly to avoid your arm getting stiff. Keep the bandage clean and dry; cover it up when in the bath or shower.

Your wound

It is important to keep your wound clean and dry; this includes the bandages/ splint/ cast.

If at any point you notice any of the following signs, please go to your nearest Emergency Department immediately:

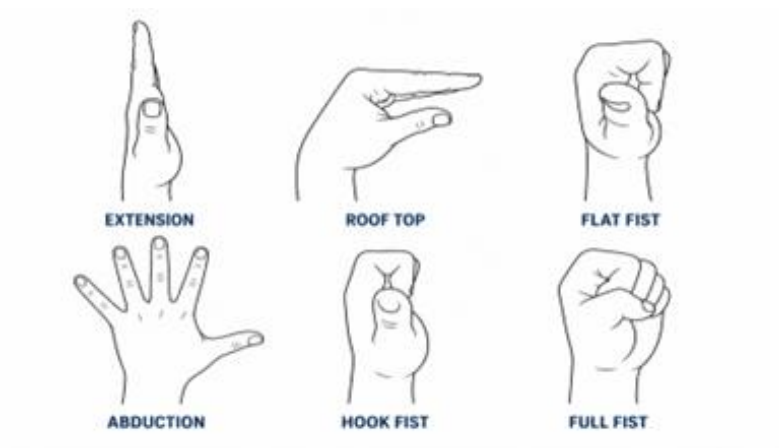
- Redness/ swelling / increased pain.
- Pus / leaking around the wound site.
- Generally feeling unwell and a high temperature.
- Swollen glands.

If your bandage gets wet, please contact either the Fracture Clinic or Hand Therapy department – contact details are at the end of this leaflet.

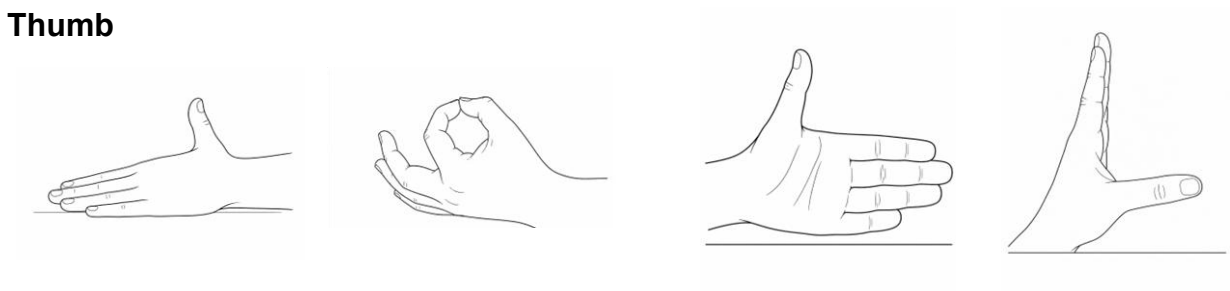
Exercises

You can start to move your fingers, thumb, elbow and shoulder immediately after surgery, unless told otherwise. Do these as your pain allows, but it should settle with practice. Complete these exercises below 10 times every two hours to ensure all the unaffected joints are moving well.

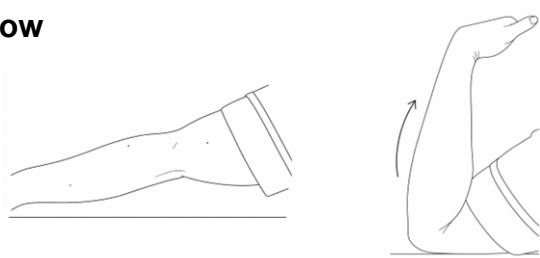
Fingers



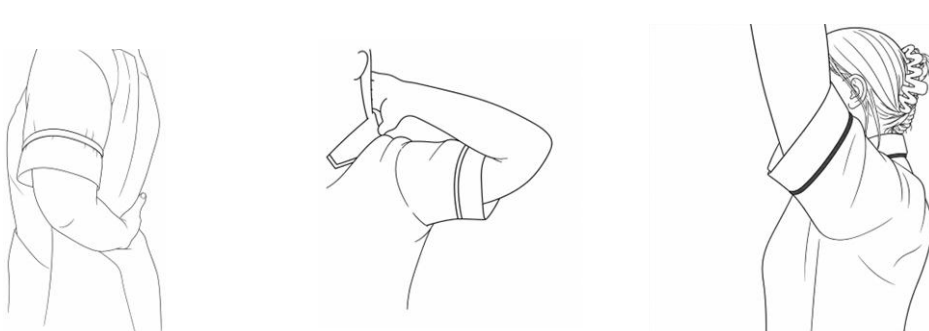
Thumb



Elbow



Shoulder



How long will it take to heal?

Initially it can take six weeks for the bones to heal, and then another six weeks. However, research shows it can take six to 12 months for your pain to settle and to use your hand normally.

You can use your hand for light functional activities as pain allows, however, it is important to not grip, do heavy lifting or drive until you speak to your doctor or therapist.

Your rehabilitation journey

Day 0

This is your operation day.

Two weeks after your operation

You will have a hand therapy appointment to remove your dressings, check the wound and remove any stitches. You will then be given a splint to wear for comfort.

Depending on the surgeon's preference they may want to review you in the fracture clinic, otherwise you will remain under the care of hand therapy until discharge.

Often it is not necessary for the doctor to review your progress, however, if you are worried or have concerns you can talk to your hand therapist or use your open appointment with the doctor if needed.

Frequently asked questions

How long will I need off work? This will mostly depend on your work.

When can I return to driving? You are allowed to drive when you have full control of the car and can complete all emergency procedures. We do not recommend you drive with your splint on. It is worth contacting your insurance company for further advice.

When can I return to sports? After 12 weeks there will be enough healing to have occurred for you to return to heavier lifting and contact sports.

Contact details:

- Fracture clinic: (01623) 622515, extension 6807.
- Hand Therapy: (01623) 622515, extension

Further sources of information

NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk/conditions

Our website: www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk

Patient Experience Team (PET)

PET is available to help with any of your compliments, concerns or complaints, and will ensure a prompt and efficient service.

King's Mill Hospital: 01623 672222

Newark Hospital: 01636 685692

Email: sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net

If you would like this information in an alternative format, for example large print or easy read, or if you need help with communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please let us know. You can call the Patient Experience Team on 01623 672222 or email sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net.

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant health professional would give you. External websites may be referred to in specific cases. Any external websites are provided for your information and convenience. We cannot accept responsibility for the information found on them. If you require a full list of references (if relevant) for this leaflet, please email sfh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net or telephone 01623 622515, extension 6927.

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