

# Long arm cast care and exercises

## Your cast

You injured your arm and that means you have to be in a cast for a period a time to allow the injury to heal.

### You should:

- Keep your cast clean and dry. When showering, first wrap a towel around the cast to absorb any water that may leak in. Then place a plastic bag around the cast with tape to ensure a snug fit.
- Check with your insurance company to see if you are able to drive without affecting your insurance.

### Do not:

- Insert any objects under the cast to scratch an itch. If you place objects under the cast you could get a skin wound that could lead to an infection. Instead tap on the outside of the cast over the itch.
- Place any additional padding inside the cast.
- Break off or trim the edges of the cast, or try to repair the cast.

### If you are having any problems with the cast, such as:

- Rubbing on the skin or you feel burning under the cast,
- If it feels too tight
- If it starts to become too loose, cracks or breaks
- If you notice any unusual smell from the cast (some odour is normal)

then you should come to the Emergency Department to get it adjusted.

## Swelling

After any injury or surgery on the arm the hand will swell.

### You should:

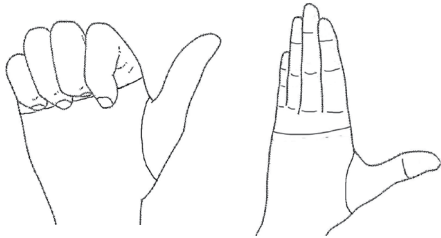
- Keep the hand elevated by keeping it in a sling or on some pillows, where the hand is higher than the elbow.
- Exercise any free fingers for 5 minutes every hour to help maintain circulation and help reduce swelling.

If the swelling is not improving or you feel numbness and tingling that is not relieved by elevation and exercise then you need to come to the Emergency Department to get the cast changed.

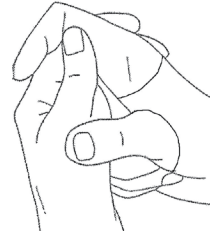
## Exercises

During the time in the cast your joints becomes stiff and the muscles become tight and weak and therefore it is good to keep all the other joints around the cast moving.

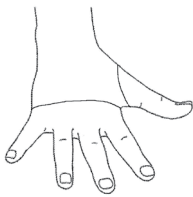
We have listed some exercises to help you. If you are feeling marked pain stop the exercises and check with your physiotherapist or surgeon. We would recommend attempting these exercises 3 times a day.



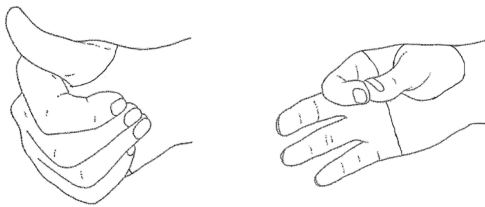
Move your fingers up and down 10 times. Repeat 3 to 5 times.



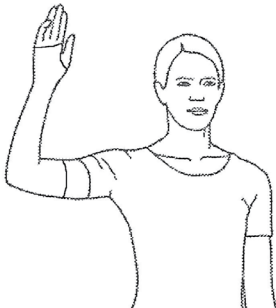
If you feel they are very stiff you can use your other hand to move the fingers backward and forward, as pictured.



Straighten the fingers and then push them apart, as in the picture. Do this 10 times. Repeat 3 to 5 times.



Lift the thumb to give a “thumbs up”. Then move it down to make an “O”, as pictured. Do this 10 times. Repeat 3 to 5 times.



Take your arm out of the sling to move your shoulder. Lift the arm above your head as far as comfortable, using the good arm to help if needed.

Do this 10 times. Repeat 3 to 5 times.

For any questions contact Physiotherapy Departments on the following phone numbers:

Gosford .....	4320 3314
Wyong .....	4394 8217
Woy Woy .....	4344 8446
Long Jetty .....	4336 7752

This brochure provides some information to assist with management and rehabilitation of your injury. While it contains the recommended general information, it does not contain all available information about your injury and is not a substitute for specific advice from the Orthopaedic and Physiotherapy Department in respect of your injury. If you do not understand the information seek clarification. This information is only designed for patients who are currently being treated by the Orthopaedic Department within the Central Coast Local Health District. If you have any concerns about progress of your rehabilitation, contact the Physiotherapy or Orthopaedic 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 Orthopaedic Clinic, or you have a new injury or condition and have not consulted the Orthopaedic or Physiotherapy Clinic about it.