

Wrist & hand exercises

0 – 6 weeks



The first 6 weeks after removal of a cast/splint

Your arm was injured and you had to be in a cast/splint for a period a time to allow it to heal. During this time your wrist and hand become stiff and the muscles become tight and weak. Your orthopaedic doctor is satisfied that the injury has healed. It is now important to get back the movement and strength in the wrist and hand (and get you doing what you need to do).

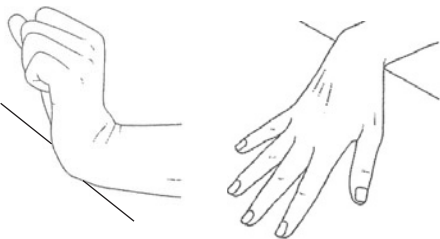
Skin and swelling

You will notice the skin may look different where the cast was in place. It is normal to have skin and hair that gathered under the cast. If you had surgery, you will see a scar that should be on its way to being healed. Wash the skin with warm, soapy water and apply moisturising cream if the skin is very dry. The skin will gradually return to normal. Contact your physiotherapist, orthopaedic doctor or local doctor if you have any concerns about your scar.

There is usually still some swelling in the wrist and hand after the cast is taken off. To help reduce this swelling you may want to wear a compression glove; also, elevate your hand during the day (when possible). It should continue to improve with time and exercise.

Exercises

Some exercises are listed below. These will help you get back to normal. It is recommended that you do these exercises 3 times a day. It is normal to feel some stretching or pressure in the wrist and hand, and even some mild pains during the exercise. These should ease off with stopping the movement. If you are feeling strong pain, stop the painful exercises. Check with your physiotherapist or orthopaedic doctor before starting again.



Support your forearm on a table, make a fist and slowly lift your wrist up. Then let the hand and fingers slowly relax and bend downwards.

Repeat this 10 times.

Start with 1 set and try to build up to 3 sets as you feel comfortable to do so.



Place your hands together, wrists on the edge of a table with the hands hanging free. Start by lifting up so the thumbs move towards the ceiling. Then slowly lower the hands over the edge so they hang down.

If you find this easy do it with the affected hand only.

Repeat this 10 times.

Start with 1 set and try to build up to 3 sets as you feel comfortable to do so.



Bend your elbow and keep it in to your side (as in the picture). Try to turn the wrist so the hand faces up towards the ceiling. Then reverse the movement, twisting the wrist so the palm faces the floor.

Repeat this 10 times.

Start with 1 set and try to build up to 3 sets as you feel comfortable to do so.



Place your elbows together up on a table and bring your palms together.

Keep the palms together as you slowly move the elbows apart (as pictured). You should feel a stretch in the wrist and hand.

Hold this position for 10 seconds and repeat 3 times.

If this is easy then try holding for longer, up to a minute.



Place the affected wrist on the edge of the table so you can let the affected hand hang over the edge.

Use the 'good' hand to apply an extra pressure to stretch across the top of the wrist and hand.

Hold this position for 10 seconds and repeat 3 times.

If this is easy then try holding for longer, up to a minute.



Make a fist, hold it tightly for 10 seconds and then relax. Repeat 3 times. If you find it easy try to hold for longer, maybe up to a minute.

When you have the strength start to place something in the fist, like a soft ball or some rolled up socks. Squeeze, holding for at least 10 seconds - longer as you are able.

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 contains general information for patients being treated at Central Coast Local Health District. It is not a substitute for more detailed information from the Orthopaedic and Physiotherapy Department (OPD). If any exercise causes more than mild discomfort, stop and seek advice from the OPD.