

# Wrist soft tissue injury – discharge advice

## Information for patients

During your visit to the emergency department, you were advised that you have injured your wrist. This leaflet answers frequently asked questions about this type of injury.

### What is a wrist soft tissue injury?

A soft tissue injury is usually a ligament sprain, but on occasion it could refer to a muscle or tendon injury.

### How long will it take to recover?

This type of injury usually heals without any problems. The pain, tenderness and swelling should settle over a period of several weeks. A splint may have been provided to hold your wrist in a comfortable position.

## Recovery plan

### 24 hours since injury

Try to rest your wrist in the splint. A cold pack (ice pack or frozen peas wrapped in a damp towel) can provide short term pain relief. Apply this to the sore area for up to 15 minutes, every three to four hours, and ensure the ice is never in direct contact with your skin.

Please follow the advice on pain relief given by the clinician you saw in the emergency department. If you need further advice, please ask your local pharmacist or GP.

### Two to three weeks since injury

Stop using the sling as you feel able to. Start 'wrist and fingers range of movement exercises' described below, stopping before it becomes too uncomfortable or painful for you.

### Three to six weeks since injury

By now you should be returning to your normal level of activity. You might still feel some discomfort with higher level activities. If you experience a significant increase in pain and/or swelling, you will need to reduce your activity levels and gradually increase these over a longer period of time.

Early movement of your wrist is important to reduce stiffness. Follow the exercises below within your pain limits. Forcible stretching is unnecessary and is likely to cause pain and delay your recovery.

## Exercises to follow

Please note, the number of times you need to carry out each exercise is included as a guide only. If you experience a significant amount of pain while carrying them out, you should reduce the number of times you do each exercise and gradually increase the amount during your recovery.

### Wrist and fingers range of movement exercises

Repeat each exercise 10 times, three to four times a day.

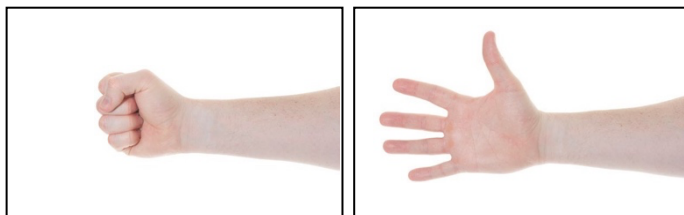
1. Move your wrist up and down as far as comfortable.



2. Keep your elbow by side and turn palm of hand up then down.



3. Open and close your hand as shown 10 to 15 times.



## Return to sport

You should be able to squat, hop, jump and run pain-free before you return to sport. If you are unable to do this or need further guidance, please see your GP, and ask for a physiotherapy referral.

## Return to driving

You should be able to perform a full emergency stop confidently and pain-free before you consider returning to driving.

## What happens next?

We do not routinely follow up patients with this type of injury as it usually heals well. However, if you are still experiencing significant symptoms after six weeks, please contact the virtual fracture clinic at the hospital you first visited.

This clinic is run by a team of physiotherapists and orthopaedic doctors who can review your

scans and notes to provide you with further information or support. If appropriate, they will make an appointment for you to be seen face-to-face in a fracture clinic.

## **Contact us**

### **Barnet Hospital, Chase Farm Hospital, Finchley Memorial Hospital, and Cheshunt Community Hospital**

- Tel: 020 8216 4445 (voicemail service only)
- Email: [rf-tr.barnethospitalvfc@nhs.net](mailto:rf-tr.barnethospitalvfc@nhs.net)

### **Edgware Community Hospital and Royal Free Hospital**

- Tel: 020 7472 6222 (voicemail service only)
- Email: [rf-tr.royalfreehospitalvfc@nhs.net](mailto:rf-tr.royalfreehospitalvfc@nhs.net)

## **Acknowledgement and references**

We would like to thank Glasgow Royal Infirmary and Leeds Teaching Hospitals for allowing us to reproduce part of their leaflets. If you require a full list of references for this leaflet please email: [rf-tr.royalfreehospitalvfc@nhs.net](mailto:rf-tr.royalfreehospitalvfc@nhs.net) or [rf-tr.barnethospitalvfc@nhs.net](mailto:rf-tr.barnethospitalvfc@nhs.net).

## **More information**

For more information about the virtual fracture clinic service at the Royal Free London, please visit our website: [www.royalfree.nhs.uk/services/trauma-and-orthopaedics](http://www.royalfree.nhs.uk/services/trauma-and-orthopaedics)

## **Your feedback**

If you have any feedback on this leaflet, please email: [rf-tr.communications@nhs.net](mailto:rf-tr.communications@nhs.net)

## **Alternative formats**

This leaflet is also available in large print. If you need this leaflet in another format – for example Braille, a language other than English or audio – please speak to a member of staff.

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