

Wrist Sprain Advice and Exercises

What is a sprain?

A wrist sprain is a common injury to the soft tissue in the wrist and surrounding area, often pain can be felt in the forearm and hand.

It can be caused by trauma, such as falling onto the hand, or through overuse or repetitive strain. The ligaments and muscles can become irritated resulting in pain and inflammation.

What are the symptoms?

- Pain
- Swelling
- Bruising
- Muscle tightness
- Reduced movement and stiffness

How long will it take to recover?

The initial pain usually settles after a few days and during this time it is important to follow the simple treatment advice in this leaflet to ensure a good recovery.

The soft tissues (muscles and ligaments) normally take around six weeks to heal; this timeframe may vary as everyone recovers from injuries at different rates.

What treatment can I use?

Pain relief-Pain killers

If your GP or pharmacist has prescribed pain killers, then these should be taken at the recommended dose

Cold Packs

A cold pack (ice pack or frozen peas wrapped in a damp towel) can also provide short-term pain relief. Apply to the sore area for up to 20 minutes, every few hours.

Rest

Try and rest the arm for the first 24-72 hours. However, it is important to maintain flexibility in the arm so gently move it without causing too much pain. This will ensure your arm does not become too stiff and it will help with the healing process.

Early movement and exercises

In the early stages it is best to avoid the activities that aggravate the pain. However, it is important to keep the wrist moving fully to prevent stiffness.

Do not rest for long periods at a time as this will lead to stiffness and weakness and prolong your recovery.

Simple, graded exercises can be performed to help gain full function of your wrist and hand.

General Advice

- The sooner you commence early exercise, the better your recovery
- Use your hand gently for light activities (e.g. washing, dressing, eating, writing)
- Keep your wrist and hand gently moving, but avoid activities that aggravate your pain
- Don't keep your wrist still, it will get stiff and healing will take longer

What should I do if the pain increases with exercise?

If your pain increases, initially reduce your activity levels. As your shoulder starts to feel better you can gradually start exercising again.

However, if your pain increases significantly stop exercises and consult your GP or physiotherapist before continuing.

Exercises

ISOMETRIC WRIST FLEXION

Sit with your hand under the table.
Push your palm up into the table.

SETS & REPS 5 x 10-20 seconds

FREQUENCY 3 x a day



ISOMETRIC WRIST EXTENSION

Sit with your hand under the table.
Push the back of your hand up into the table.

SETS & REPS 5 x 10-20 seconds

FREQUENCY 3 x a day



WAVING YOUR HAND UP AND DOWN

Keeping your hand and forearm in-line, wave your hand up and down.

SETS & REPS: 3 x 10-20

FREQUENCY: 2-3 x a day



Exercise Illustrations: © TheRehabLab

Please visit our website for information on how to access your local physiotherapy service.

<http://sussexmskpartnershipcentral.co.uk/physiotherapy/>