

After surgery on a broken wrist: plate and screws

After surgery on a broken bone



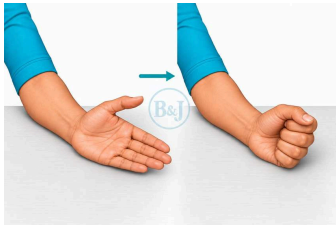
Count the weeks from the day of your operation. The date is on your discharge card.

If your doctor wrote a different plan on your prescription, follow that instead of this page.

Weeks 0–2

Bring the swelling down: keep the hand raised above the level of the heart for the first few days. Move the fingers, elbow and shoulder from the first day.

Arm use In the splint or plaster: light use for eating and writing. No lifting, pushing or leaning on this hand.



Composite fist

Make a full fist slowly, then open fully.

10 times

Every hour while awake

✓ **Should feel**
Full movement

✗ **Should not feel**
Catching that hurts



Tendon glides

Move the fingers through straight, hook, full fist and back to straight.

10 times

3 times a day

✓ **Should feel**
The tendons moving freely

✗ **Should not feel**
Catching



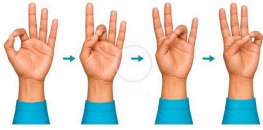
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Finger to thumb touches

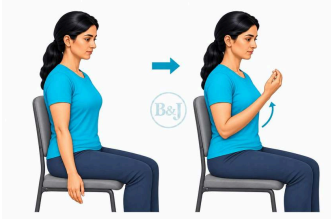
Touch each fingertip to the thumb in turn.

10 rounds

3 times a day

✓ **Should feel**
Smooth control

✗ **Should not feel**
Locking



Elbow bend and straighten

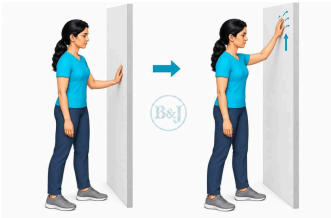
Sit with the arm by your side. Bend the elbow slowly as far as it goes, bringing the hand up, then straighten it fully.

10 times

3 times a day

✓ **Should feel**
A gentle stretch at the front or back of the elbow

✗ **Should not feel**
Sharp pain



Wall climb

Face a wall, walk the fingers up as high as comfortable, hold, then walk down.

5 times

3 times a day

✓ **Should feel**
A stretch overhead

✗ **Should not feel**
Shrugging to cheat height

Not yet Letting the arm hang down for long, wetting the wound before the stitches are out, or driving.

Move to the next stage only after we have seen you, and the X-ray if one was planned.



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Weeks 2–6

Stitches out. Get the wrist moving: take the splint off for the exercises, and wear it outdoors and at night unless we tell you otherwise. Carry on with the earlier exercises.

Arm use Light daily tasks indoors without the splint: eating, writing, dressing. Nothing heavier than a full glass of water.



Warm water soak

Rest both hands in a bowl of warm water. Open and close a loose fist slowly while they are in the water.

5 minutes

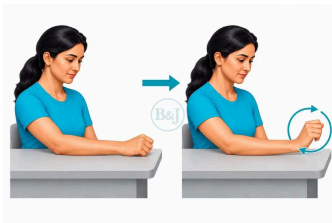
Before the exercises

✓ **Should feel**

The hands loosening as they warm

✗ **Should not feel**

Water hot enough to sting or redden the skin



Wrist circles

Slow circles in both directions.

10 each way

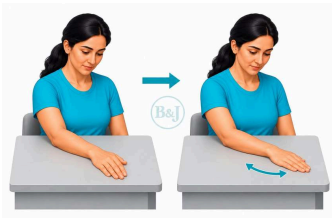
3 times a day

✓ **Should feel**

Free movement

✗ **Should not feel**

Pain over the lump



Wrist side to side

Gentle side-to-side movement.

10 times

3 times a day

✓ **Should feel**

Free movement

✗ **Should not feel**

Sharp pain



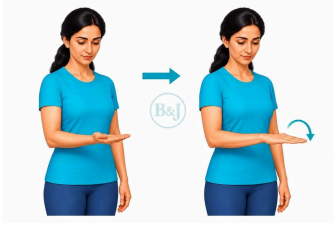
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Forearm rotation

Elbow tucked in, turn the palm up and down slowly.

10 times

3 times a day

✓ **Should feel**
Free movement

✗ **Should not feel**
Clicking with pain



Prayer stretch

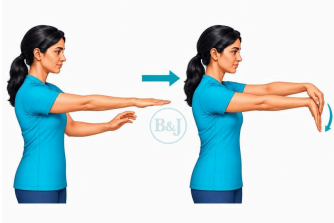
Palms together, lower the hands until you feel a stretch.

Hold 20 seconds

3 times

✓ **Should feel**
A stretch at the front of the wrist

✗ **Should not feel**
Numbness increasing



Wrist extensor stretch

Straighten the elbow, palm down, and gently pull the hand down.

Hold 20 seconds

3 times

✓ **Should feel**
A stretch on top of the forearm

✗ **Should not feel**
Numbness

Not yet Lifting, pushing up from a chair with this hand, or forcing a stretch into sharp pain.

Move to the next stage only after we have seen you, and the X-ray if one was planned.



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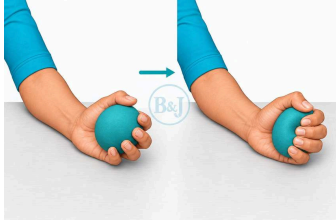
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Weeks 6–12

Splint off, as the X-ray shows healing. Build grip and wrist strength and go back to normal daily use. Carry on with the earlier exercises.

Arm use Normal daily use. Lift heavier things a little at a time as the strength comes back.



Grip squeeze

Squeeze a soft ball gently.

10 times

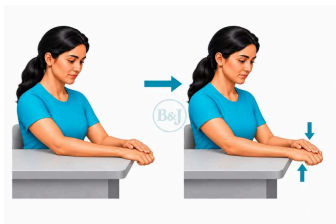
2 times a day

✓ Should feel

The hand working

✗ Should not feel

Pain



Isometric wrist extension

Press the back of the hand upwards against the other hand without moving.

Hold 10 seconds

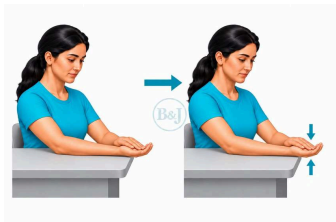
10 times

✓ Should feel

The forearm working

✗ Should not feel

Pain



Isometric wrist flexion

Press the palm downwards against the other hand without moving.

Hold 10 seconds

10 times

✓ Should feel

The forearm working

✗ Should not feel

Pain



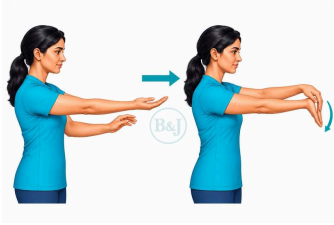
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Wrist flexor stretch

Straighten the elbow, palm up, and gently pull the fingers back.

Hold 20 seconds

3 times

✓ Should feel

A stretch under the forearm

✗ Should not feel

Tingling in the little finger

Not yet Heavy lifting, push-ups or weight training.

Move to the next stage only after we have seen you, and the X-ray if one was planned.



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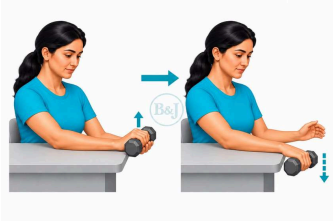
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Week 12 onwards

Back to full work and sport, as the X-ray shows. Carry on with the third-stage exercises.

Arm use Full.



Eccentric wrist extension

Hold a light weight, palm down. Lift with the other hand, then lower SLOWLY over 3 seconds using the painful arm.

15 times

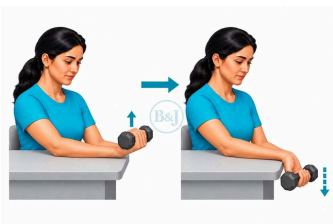
Once a day

✓ **Should feel**

A working ache in the forearm

✗ **Should not feel**

Sharp pain at the elbow



Eccentric wrist flexion

Hold a light weight, palm up. Lift with the other hand, then lower SLOWLY over 3 seconds.

15 times

Once a day

✓ **Should feel**

A working ache in the forearm

✗ **Should not feel**

Sharp pain at the inner elbow

Not yet Contact sport or heavy lifting until we clear you.

Stop and telephone us if

- Pain that keeps getting worse despite the painkillers, or is much worse when you straighten the fingers
- The fingers become numb, cold, pale or blue
- New or increasing tingling or numbness in the thumb and the first two fingers
- Wound redness, discharge or fever
- You suddenly cannot lift the thumb
- Burning pain, shiny or discoloured skin, or fingers getting stiffer instead of looser



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