

Arm in plaster — and after it comes off

A broken bone in plaster



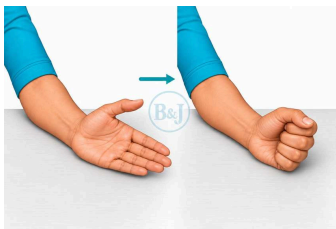
The plaster stays on for as long as we have written on your prescription. The later stages count from the day it comes off.

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

While in plaster

For the first 2–3 days keep the hand raised above the level of the heart, on pillows, to bring the swelling down. Keep moving every joint the plaster leaves free. Do the elbow exercise only if the plaster stops below the elbow.

Arm use Light use only: eating, writing, dressing. No lifting, carrying, pushing or leaning on this hand. Use the sling only if we gave you one, and only when walking about.



Composite fist

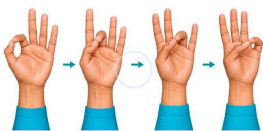
Make a full fist slowly, then open fully.

10 times

Every hour while awake

✓ **Should feel**
Full movement

✗ **Should not feel**
Catching that hurts



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



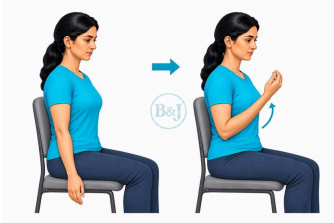
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sheet 78

Nallasopara West 87665 22099 · 12–2 pm, 7.30–9.30 pm

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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

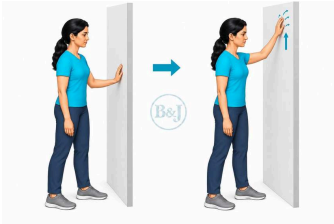
3 times a day

✓ **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, getting the plaster wet, pushing anything inside it, or driving or riding a two-wheeler.

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



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First 2 weeks after the plaster comes off

Get the wrist and forearm moving again. Stiffness, some swelling and dry skin are normal and settle over the coming weeks. Carry on with the finger exercises.

Arm use Everyday light tasks: eating, writing, dressing, washing. 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

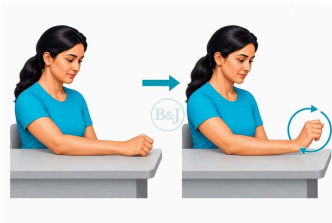
Before the exercises

✓ **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

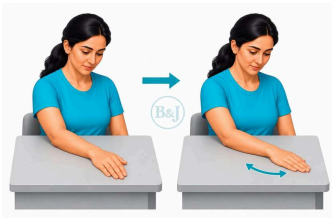
3 times a day

✓ **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

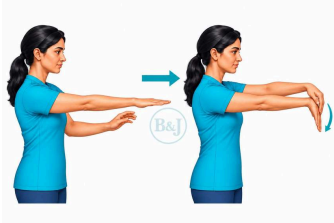
Palms together, lower the hands until you feel a stretch.

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 anything heavy, 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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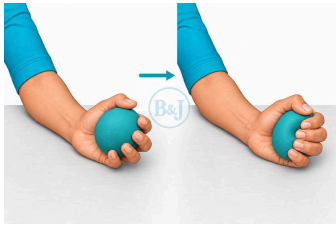
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2 to 6 weeks after the plaster comes off

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

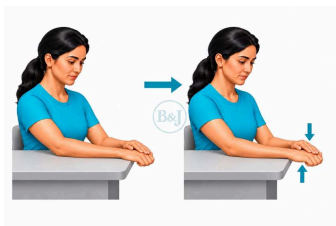
2 times a day

✓ 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

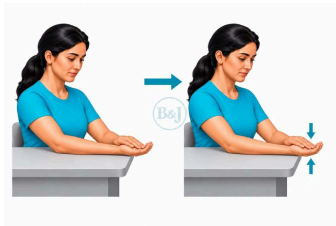
10 times

✓ 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



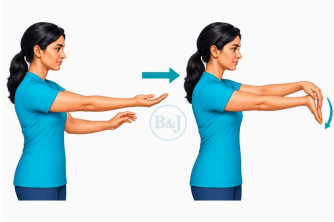
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Wrist flexor stretch

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 sport that loads the wrist, until we clear you.

Looking after the plaster

- A plaster takes up to 2 days to harden fully. Until then, rest it on a pillow and do not press, knock or walk on it.
- Keep it dry. For a bath, cover it with two plastic bags taped at the top, and still keep it out of the water.
- Never push anything inside to scratch, and do not pull out the padding or trim the edges.
- No oil, powder or cream under the plaster. For itching, blow cool air inside with a fan or a hair dryer on the cold setting.
- Do not cut or remove the plaster yourself. We remove it in the clinic.

When the plaster comes off

- The skin will be dry and flaky. Wash it gently with soap and lukewarm water, pat it dry and put on a plain moisturiser. Do not scrub or pick at it.
- The limb will feel stiff, weak and thinner for a few weeks. This is normal and improves with the exercises.
- Some swelling, aching and stiffness, worse by evening or in cold weather, can last for some months.

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, tingling, cold, pale or blue**
- **You cannot move the fingers**
- **The fingers stay very swollen even with the hand raised**
- **The plaster feels too tight, or rubs or burns in one spot**
- **The plaster is cracked, soft, wet or loose, or something has fallen inside it**
- **A bad smell or discharge from under the plaster, or fever**



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