

Wrist ORIF Recovery

The wrist is where the radius and ulna meet the bones of the hand. A fracture of one or both bones may require an operation to realign them to ensure that the wrist moves freely in the future. This operation is called an Open Reduction and Internal Fixation and involves, more often than not, a plate and screws to hold the bone in place. Sometimes the fracture may be treated without a plate.













After your surgery you are usually put in a backslab of plaster and bandages applied to your wrist until your review appointment with Dr Bradshaw. During this period, you will be given pain medication and rest as much as possible is advised. You should elevate your wrist on pillows as much as possible to reduce the occurrence of increased swelling. Ice therapy can be used to also help alleviate any swelling that may occur. This can be applied to your fingers to ensure the bandaging stays dry. NEVER apply an ice pack directly to the skin, ensure that it is wrapped in a tea towel or something similar.



When you have your post-op appointment, and your sutures are removed, and the wound reviewed you will be able to move to a wrist splint to help protect and immobilise your wrist to protect the plate while the bone repairs. The plate is very thin and while it can hold the bones in alignment it cannot stand great force. For this reason, you will not be able to lift anything heavier than a few hundred grams such as a cup of coffee. Remember, if it causes pain or discomfort, you are doing too much.



You may remove your splint to perform some gentle exercises to help prevent stiffness occurring and reduced movement in your wrist. These exercises are simple to begin with and include the exercises below.

	<p>Straighten your fingers.</p>		<p>Squeeze your fingers and make a fist.</p>
			
<p>Touch your thumb to each fingertip in turn, starting at your index and working through to your little finger.</p>		<p>Rest on your elbow and move your wrist forwards and backwards.</p>	
			
<p>Place your elbow at your side at a 90 degree angle. Slowly try to rotate your hand/wrist to a 'palms up' then 'palms down' position.</p>		<p>Place your hand flat on the table, slowly move your wrist from side to side.</p>	

As your recovery progresses you may be able to attempt more difficult exercises. You may be referred to a physio who will guide you through the exercises for your recovery. Remember, pain indicates that you are attempting too much.