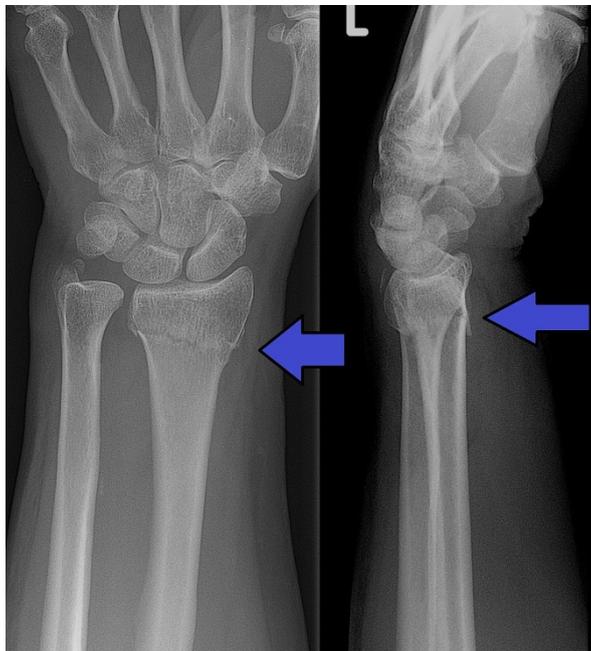


## Wrist fracture – Not requiring surgery

There are many terms that can be used to describe your injury. The common ones are fracture, break and crack – they all mean the same thing. When you have an injury like yours it is not just the bone that is affected. You will also have injured some of the soft tissues around it. Soft tissues include the muscles, ligaments, tendons and nerves.



### Recovery Times

Most of the healing happens between 6 – 12 weeks

It is not unusual to have aches and discomfort beyond this, often when you do activities you haven't done for a while. Sometimes the area is more sensitive for months and this is normal.

### Things that could affect your recovery

#### Smoking

Smoking slows fracture healing times. In some people, it can stop healing altogether. Smoking affects all your tissues; stopping smoking during the healing phase of your fracture will help ensure the best recovery.

For help to stop smoking see <https://www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/stopping-smoking>

#### General Health

Some medical conditions may slow down the healing e.g. diabetes

Eating a healthy diet and keeping yourself active will help your recovery

#### Medication

Some medications you are already taking can slow down fracture healing. If you have concerns about your medication talk to a health professional.

Anti-inflammatory medication, ie. Ibuprofen or Naproxen, has been shown to delay healing.

### What to expect

This is usually a minor fracture but can be debilitating as you cannot use your hand normally.

Depending on the type of fracture you have you may be immobilised in a cast or a wrist splint. For advice regarding management in a cast please follow this link: (hyperlink).

If you have been given a splint then it is safe to remove it for hygiene purposes. If the splint is no longer fitting well then please contact your fracture clinic.

Weeks	Plan
0-4wks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Maintain your shoulder and elbow movements</li><li>✓ Keep your fingers and thumb moving. Regularly open and close your hand making a fist.</li><li>✓ Manage you pain and swelling</li></ul>
4-6wks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ As guided you will come out of your splint or cast and you can start gentle movement exercises for your wrist.</li><li>✓ It is not unusual to be stiff when your cast or splint is removed.</li></ul>
6-12wks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Return to full function/resume normal day to day activity</li><li>✓ Gradually increase the amount of weight you are carrying</li><li>✓ Return to contact sports at 12 weeks.</li></ul>

## Pain

It is normal to have some discomfort in the areas around your fracture. The areas affected can be:

- Other soft tissues
- Nearby joints
- Areas which have been immobilised

Pain changes from day to day, it doesn't always depend on what you are doing. It is not unusual to have pain at rest. It is normal to have some pain even when your fracture has healed

**Should I take painkillers after a fracture?** Click on this link for advice about painkillers (hyperlink to pharmacy page)

## Swelling

It is normal to have swelling near the fracture site. It often spreads (down/up your leg/arm- make specific to injury). The amount of swelling can change with your position, activity or the time of day. This can in some cases last for months. It is important that the swelling is managed well to aid your recovery.

### How can I help the swelling?

- Raise your arm above your heart when resting
- Keep the other joints in your (leg/arm-make specific) moving normally
- Find a balance between rest and activity
- Use self massage to decrease swelling. If able direct the massage from your fingertips towards your elbow.

Having a lot of swelling can become uncomfortable or limit your movement.

## Bruising

It is normal to have bruising. Bruising can be widespread and appear a long way from your fracture. It changes colour as it recovers and can be very purple to start with.

## Getting back to normal activities

**In general gradually pace yourself back to your activities as you feel able.**

### Driving

It is your responsibility to make sure that you are always in full control of your vehicle.

Your injury may affect your insurance and you should contact your insurer before driving.

You need to be able to grip the steering wheel and use indicators and handbrake safely.

The general advice is you must be able to safely perform an emergency stop or manoeuvre.

### Work

Your return to work will depend on the type of work you do and your employer. It may be possible to discuss a phased return to work, changed duties etc. You don't need to see a health care professional to return to work.

### Daily Activities

Keep doing any activities you are able, as your pain allows. Gradually increase what you do. Reduced flexibility and strength may make things more difficult to start with. This will get better as you slowly build up to all your usual activities.

### Mood

Frustration or low mood after your injury is normal, as you get back to normal life this will get better.

### Falls

Loss of confidence is common after a fracture; here are some links that may help:

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/campaigns/falls>

<http://www.knowledge.scot.nhs.uk/fallsandbonehealth/the-national-falls-programme.aspx>

### Bone scanning

You may be sent a letter inviting you for a scan of your bone density. This is routine if you fit the criteria and is nothing to worry about.

## Exercises for your Wrist

Once guided by your healthcare professional you can start the following exercises:

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/muscle-bone-and-joints/exercises/exercises-for-wrist-hand-and-finger-problems>