

Physiotherapy Department

Wrist and hand pain

advice sheet

There are several structures around the wrist/hand which can be injured. These include muscles, cartilage and ligaments. Many wrist/hand injuries or episodes of wrist/hand pain will resolve within a few weeks by following the advice below.

If your wrist/hand is swollen, you can reduce the swelling by placing your wrist and hand alternately in warm and then iced water. About 30 seconds in warm water followed by 30 seconds in cold, and so on. After about 5 to 10 minutes your hand will have flushed 'pink': this increase in circulation will help the swelling to go down and make the wrist feel more comfortable. You could also try resting it on a cushion or pillow so your elbow is below your hand.

Taking painkillers will also make it feel more comfortable and enable you to move it more easily. Seek advice from your GP or pharmacist.

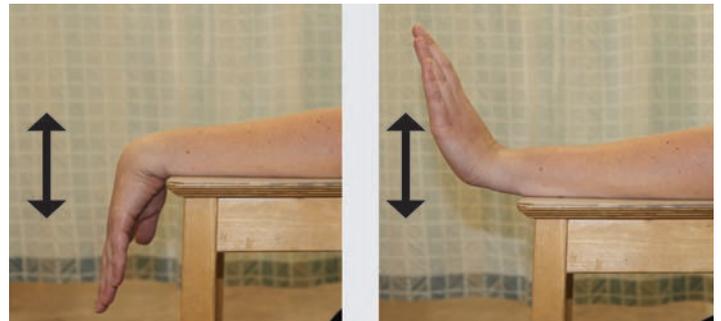
Here are some exercises you should do: If they cause you severe pain, then stop them.

1 Place palms together and rest elbows on table. Gradually move elbows outwards until you feel a pull on the inside of your wrist. Hold while you count to 3. Relax.

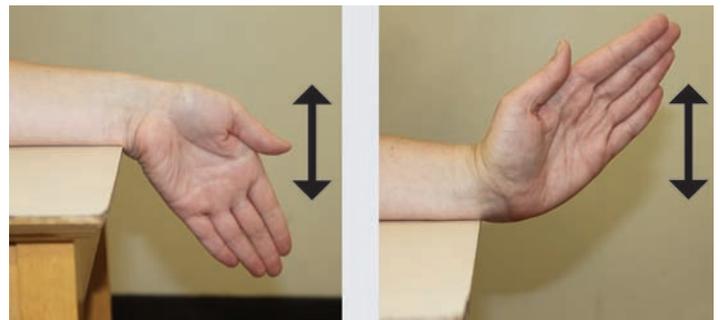
Repeat 5 – 10 times



2 Bend your wrist. Use your opposite hand to help it bend more. Hold while you count to 3. Relax. Then extend your wrist and hold for a count of 3. **Repeat 5 – 10 times.**



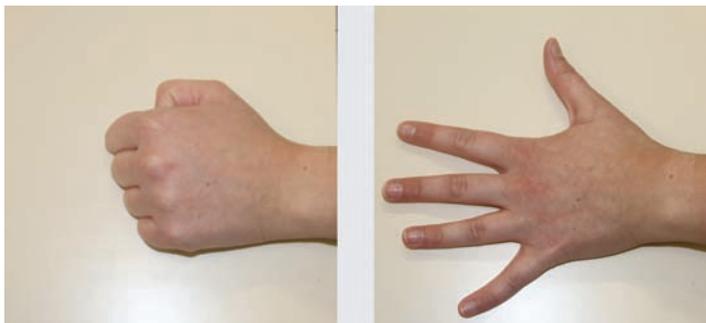
3 Start with forearm supported, palm facing in and thumb to the ceiling, lower your hand down to the floor and then bring the hand up to the ceiling. **Repeat 5-10 times.**



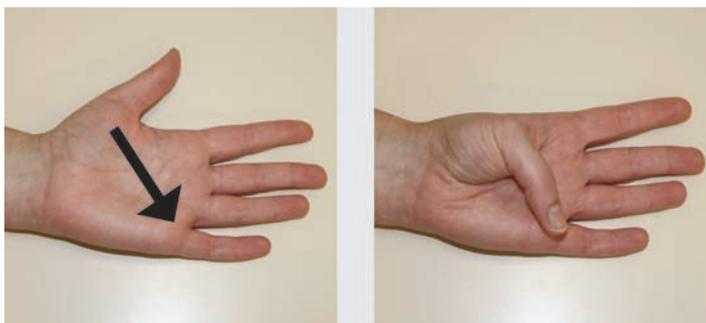
4 Place forearm on a table, palm turned down. Turn palm alternately up and down, keeping elbow still. **Repeat 5 – 10 times.**



5 You should also practise gripping by making a fist and then releasing the fingers. It is best to do a little and often.



6 Then open your palm and reach your thumb across to each finger in turn.



As you get more movement and power in your hand, the discomfort will subside. You should try to use the hand as normally as possible, e.g when dressing and eating.

REMEMBER DO MOVE YOUR WRIST AND HAND 'LITTLE AND OFTEN' AS PAIN ALLOWS

Only perform exercises to the start of your pain – never force yourself through severe pain. Stop them if the exercises severely increase your symptoms.

If your symptoms persist after this or significantly worsen, please seek medical advice.

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