

Exercises of your arm & hand while in a cast

Patient information - Orthopaedic Services



Your wrist has been immobilised to prevent movement and allow the bones to heal.

Due to your injury, swelling, stiffness and weakness may develop.

Much can be done to minimise the effects of trauma.

Your discomfort should slowly decrease.

Contact:

Orthopaedic Outpatients Department, Christchurch Hospital — 364 0800
OR Surgical Orthopaedic Unit, Burwood Hospital — 383 6834

- If your pain, swelling or stiffness worsens significantly.
- If your cast is painful or appears too tight or too loose.

Swelling

Often a sling is provided but should be worn for the first one or two days only. Prolonged use of the sling can lead to shoulder and elbow stiffness.

Elevating the arm will aid the reduction of the swelling and can be achieved by resting your hand on the opposite shoulder or resting your arm on a pillow.

Activities

Avoid getting the cast wet by wrapping your arm in a plastic bag when in contact with water.

There are many household activities that can still be performed while in a cast, e.g. folding laundry.

Continue to incorporate the arm in light daily activities to maintain mobility.

Exercises

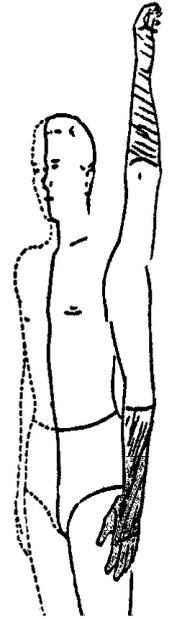
The following exercises are important and will help reduce swelling and prevent stiffness and weakness.

They should be performed **4 times a day**.

Exercises 1) and 2) cannot be performed if your cast is above the elbow.

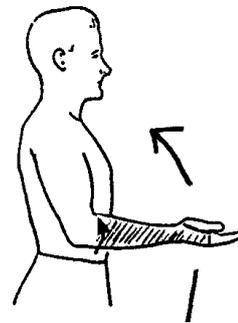
1) Shoulder

Stretch whole arm above head. Hold 5 seconds. **Repeat 5 times.**



2) Elbow

Fully bend and straighten the elbow. **Repeat 5 times.**



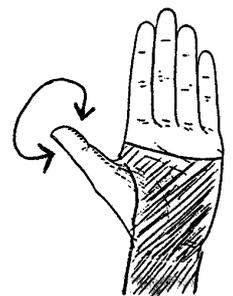
3) Fingers

Fully clench fingers to palm (cast). Make sure all 3 joints of each finger are flexed. Straighten completely. **Repeat 5 times.**



4) Thumb

Rotate thumb in all directions within limits of the cast. **Repeat 5 times.**



For more information about:

- your health and medication, go to www.healthinfo.org.nz
- hospital and specialist services, go to www.cdhb.health.nz