

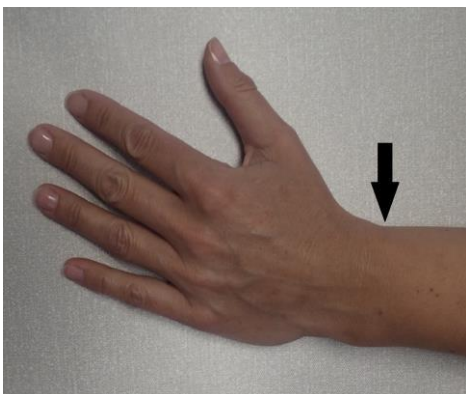
Virtual Fracture Clinic  
Orthopaedic Department  
York Teaching Hospital

This is a follow-up letter to your recent telephone consultation with the fracture care team explaining the ongoing management of your injury. Your case has been reviewed by an Orthopaedic Consultant (Bone Specialist) and Fracture Care Physiotherapist.

**You have sustained a distal radius fracture (the bone on the thumb side of the wrist)**

- Healing:** This normally takes approximately 6 weeks to heal. It is normal for it to continue to ache a bit for 3-6 months after the injury.
- Pain and swelling:** Take pain killers as prescribed. The plaster backslab helps healing by keeping the bones in a good position. Elevate the arm to reduce swelling for the first few days
- Using your arm:** It is important to keep the fingers and thumb moving to prevent stiffness.
- Follow up:** There is a small chance that this fracture can displace (move). Therefore we routinely recommend a repeat x ray at 1 week after the injury and a new plaster cast.

**Area of injury:**



If you are worried that you are unable to follow this rehabilitation plan,

**Or,** if you are experiencing pain or symptoms, other than at the site of the original injury or surrounding area,

or have any questions, then please phone the Fracture Care Team for advice.  
(see map attached)

**York Virtual Fracture Clinic Contact details:**

**Phone:** 01904 726575

**Scarborough Trauma Assessment and Treatment Unit (TATU):**

**Phone:** 01723 342021 / 07385 463781

**Email:** virtualfractclinic@york.nhs.uk

Please follow the plan:

Weeks since injury	Plan
0-1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ You will be in a backslab.</li> <li>✓ Use the sling for the first few days if the arm is painful.</li> <li>✓ Move your fingers and elbow often (do the stage 1 exercises)</li> </ul>
1-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ You will be seen in clinic</li> <li>✓ You will be put in a full plaster (this will be removed in the clinic at 5-6 weeks) Continue to move the fingers often.</li> <li>✓ You can use the arm for simple tasks as pain permits.</li> </ul>
6 -12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ The fracture is united (healed)</li> <li>✓ You can begin to resume normal activity but be guided by any pain you are experiencing.</li> <li>✓ You can start the stage 2 exercises below if the wrist feels stiff.</li> <li>✓ Carry out day to day activities.</li> <li>✗ Heavy tasks, heavy lifting or sport may cause some initial discomfort.</li> </ul>
12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ If you are still experiencing significant pain and swelling then please contact the Fracture Care Team for advice.</li> </ul>

### Advice for a new injury

#### Rest and Elevation:

Try to rest the arm for the first 24-72 hours to allow the early stage of healing to begin. Raise your wrist above the level of your heart with a sling if it is throbbing.

#### Movement and exercise:

It is important to keep your fingers and thumb moving while you are in the plaster. After the plaster is removed your wrist will be stiff, please follow the exercises below to get the movement back.

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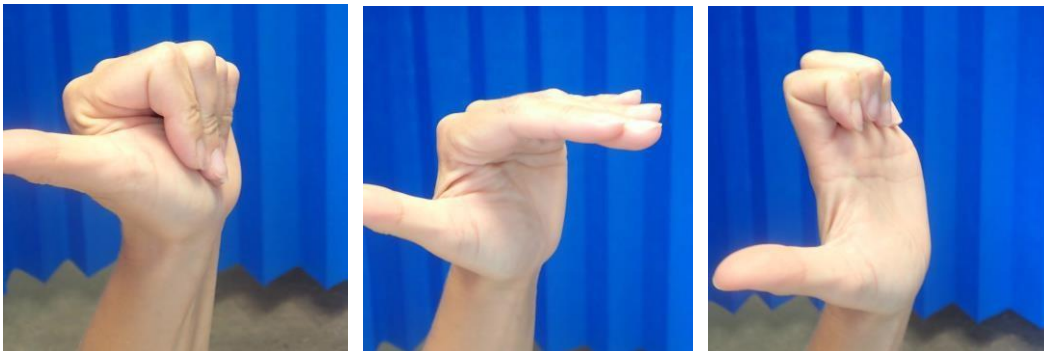
## Stop smoking

Medical evidence suggests that smoking increases the time it takes for a fracture to heal. In extreme cases it can stop healing altogether. Stopping smoking during the healing phase of your fracture will help ensure the best recovery from this injury.

For advice on stopping smoking and local support available, please refer to the following website: <http://smokefree.nhs.uk> or discuss this with your GP.

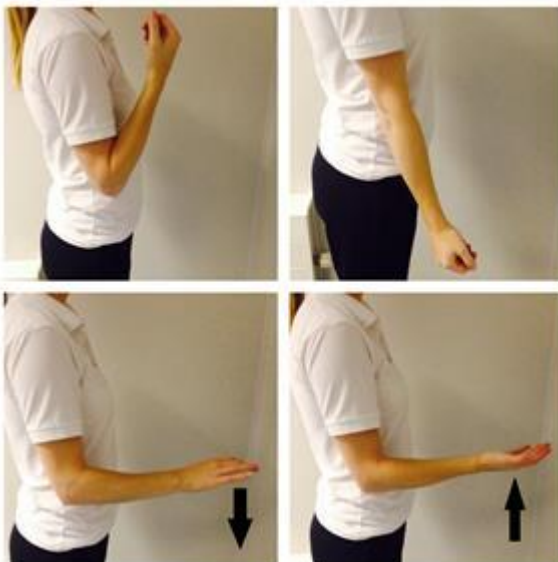
### Exercises:

#### Stage 1 exercises:



#### Finger exercises:

Keep your fingers moving whilst you are in the plaster



#### Elbow Bend to Straighten

Bend and straighten your elbow as far as you can without pain.

You should not feel more than a mild to moderate stretch.

You can use your other arm to assist if necessary.

Repeat 10 - 15 times if there is no increase in pain.

#### Forearm Rotations

Begin this exercise with your elbow at your side and bent to 90 degrees.

Slowly turn your palm up and down as far as you can go without pain.

You should not feel more than a mild to moderate stretch.

You can use your other arm to assist if necessary.

Repeat 10 - 15 times if there is no increase in pain.

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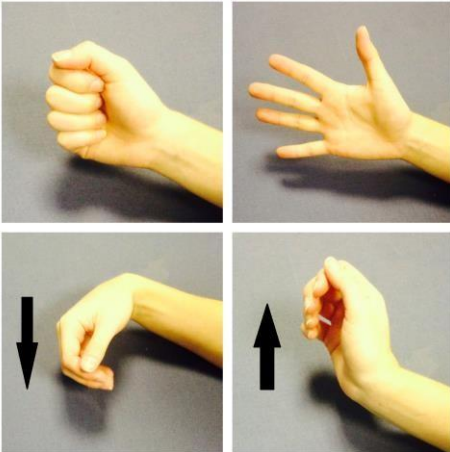
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**Stage 2 exercises:**



**Finger and wrist flexion and extension**

Open and close your hand as shown 10-15 times.  
Then move your wrist up and down 10-15 times.

After a few days, hold a soft ball / ball of socks.  
Squeeze the ball as hard as possible without pain.

Hold for 5 seconds and repeat 10 times.

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