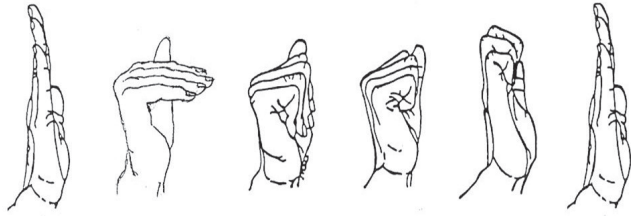


## Finger and tendon gliding exercises



- 1 Straight
- 2 Table top
- 3 Flat fist
- 4 Full fist
- 5 Hook
- 6 Straight

## How often should I exercise?

Complete the exercises 3 to 4 times a day. Build up the repetitions of each exercise, for example starting with 5 and increasing to 10 as the movement becomes less painful.

### Do not

- Wear any rings on your fingers until the swelling has reduced.
- Immobilise your hand/wrist (unless advised to do so).

### Do

- Take regular pain relief.
- Regularly exercise your hand/wrist.
- Use ice and elevation to reduce the swelling.
- Continue with light activities.
- Try to use your hand as normally as possible.

- Gradually reintroduce heavier activities as your pain allows.
- Contact your GP if you are concerned about your recovery.

## General support

- For general medical advice please use the NHS website, the [NHS 111](https://111.nhs.uk) service, walk-in-centres, or your GP.
- NHS website provides online health information and guidance [www.nhs.uk](https://www.nhs.uk)
- There are walk-in and urgent treatment services at Brighton Station, Crawley Urgent Treatment Centre, Lewes Victoria Hospital, Horsham Minor Injuries Unit and Bognor Regis War Memorial Hospital.

We are committed to making our publications as accessible as possible. If you need this document in an alternative format, for example, large print, Braille or a language other than English, please contact the Communications Office by emailing [Communications@wsht.nhs.uk](mailto:Communications@wsht.nhs.uk)

This leaflet is intended for patients receiving care in Brighton & Hove, Haywards Heath, Shoreham, Worthing or Chichester

Reference no. 2160  
Publication date: 22/10/2022  
Review date: 22/10/2025

© University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust Disclaimer: The information in this leaflet is for guidance purposes only and is in no way intended to replace professional clinical advice by a qualified practitioner.



# Hand and Wrist Soft Tissue Injury

Advice for patients seen in the Emergency Department

## What is a soft tissue injury?

There are many different soft tissues including ligaments, muscles, tendons, cartilage and nerves. Injury to any of these tissues can result in pain and inflammation. The type of tissue injured and severity of the injury will affect how long it takes to heal. Healing times vary up to 6-8 weeks, or longer for severe injuries.

## What can I do to help the healing process?

### Rest

Pace your activity and have regular rest breaks. Initially try to avoid painful activities until your hand/wrist is feeling stronger and the pain has begun to settle. Complete rest / immobilisation is **not advised** following a soft tissue injury as it can cause the joints to stiffen and may make your recovery longer.

### Ice

In the early days following an injury, ice can be applied to help reduce pain. To avoid an ice burn, an ice pack should be applied through a wet towel. Apply the ice for approximately 20 minutes. This can be repeated every 2-3 hours.

### Elevation

Elevating your limb will help to reduce the swelling. You may choose to rest on cushions or wear a sling. Elevation is particularly important following a hand and wrist injury because swelling will reduce movement, limit function and increase pain.

### Pain Relief

Take regular pain relief to enable you to regularly exercise and use your hand/wrist for light activities. Your GP or Pharmacist can advise you on appropriate pain relief.

### Heat

Application of a heat pack prior to exercising may be comfortable and help you to achieve more movement. However, if the injured area remains warm or hot it is better to continue using ice.

### Exercise

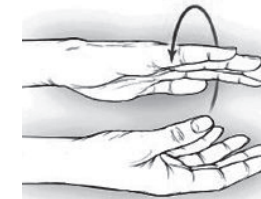
Is it **very important** that you keep your hand and wrist moving to help the healing process and to maintain your function. The following exercises will guide you through your full range of hand and wrist movements. You should continue doing the exercises until you are pain free and your movement and function is back to your pre-injury level.

## Wrist Exercises



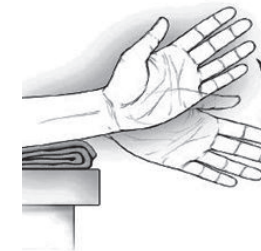
### Wrist extension and flexion

Forearm supported on a table, move hand up and down feeling a gentle stretch.



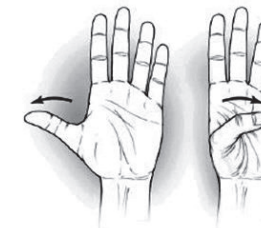
### Wrist supination and pronation

Elbow bent to 90 degrees, rotate your forearm, so that your palm faces up and then down.



### Wrist ulnar/radial deviation

Forearm supported on a table, thumb upwards, move the wrist up and down.



### Thumb flexion and extension

Begin with thumb positioned outward. Move the thumb across the palm and back.