



## Wrist Injury Advice

Following injury, your wrist may be swollen, bruised and painful due to the damage to the soft tissues such as ligaments, tendons, muscles, etc. You can also have wrist pain from repetitive use that results in an inflammation of the tendons (tendonitis). This is termed a repetitive strain injury and is really not a true sprain. However the symptoms can be similar, so in order to help the natural healing process, please follow the advice below.

<b>Things you should do</b>	<b>Things you should not do</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rest for the first 48/72 hours after your injury using your wrist as little as possible</li><li>• To help prevent/reduce the swelling keep your wrist raised (elevated) in your sling or on pillows - ideally with your wrist above the level of your heart.</li><li>• Use ice packs (frozen peas wrapped in a towel will do), for 15-20 minutes every 2-3 hours if you can</li><li>• Take the recommended medication to relieve the pain – this can be bought over the counter from a pharmacy or local shops. Follow the instructions on the packet/bottle carefully</li><li>• If you have been given a splint, this should be removed when resting and at night.</li><li>• Keep your shoulder and elbow moving normally.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use ice packs<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ over areas of skin that are in poor condition</li><li>○ if you have poor sensation to cold</li><li>○ if you know you have poor circulation.</li></ul></li><li>• Place ice packs directly onto your skin as they can burn.</li><li>• Do not leave ice on while asleep.</li><li>• Do not use ice for more than 20 minutes at a time - you will not be helping heal the sprained wrist any faster, and you can cause damage to the tissue</li></ul>

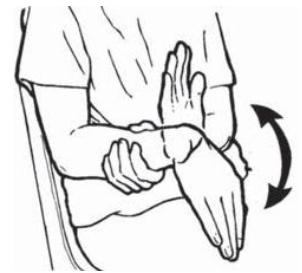
## Exercises

**Begin these flexibility exercises as soon as you can provided they do not cause excessive pain.** For the first 24/48 hours, try to do them 4-5 times a day, especially after you have taken pain relief and used ice (this reduces pain and makes movement around the injury more comfortable) as this will help to stop your wrist and hand from becoming stiff. They may give you some discomfort but should not worsen the pain – try to move more each time. Gradually use the involved wrist as much as you can, but try to avoid any activities that cause pain.

### Exercise 1

Hold your injured arm well above the wrist so that your palm faces down towards the floor. Slowly move the hand up as far as possible until a stretch is felt, hold for 5 seconds, then stretch down as far as possible and hold for 5 seconds.

**Repeat 10 times and 4 – 5 times a day.**



### Exercise 2

Again hold your injured arm well above the wrist palm down and move the hand towards the thumb side of the wrist and then towards the little finger side.

**Repeat 10 times and 4 – 5 times a day.**



Then combine the above movements and move the wrist in as large a circle as possible. **Repeat 10 times and 4 – 5 times a day.**

### Exercise 3



Tuck your elbow into your side, turn your palm up until a stretch is felt. Hold for 5 seconds. Slowly turn hand down until a stretch is felt. Hold for 5 seconds.

**Repeat 10 times and 4 – 5 times a day.**

### Exercise 4



Hold the fingers of your hand to be stretched. Pull back gently to bend your wrist until you feel stretching on the inside of your wrist. Hold for 5 seconds. Repeat 10 times and 4 – 5 times a day.



Then let your hand slowly drop helping it gently with your other hand. Hold for 5 seconds. Repeat 10 times and 4 – 5 times a day.

As each day goes by, you should be able to move the wrist more freely and with less soreness, until the movement should eventually be the same as that on your unaffected side. Start returning to light activities, steadily building up the daily use and progressing to more demanding activities. It may be some weeks before full strength returns.

Depending on how badly your wrist is sprained, it may take between 4 - 8 weeks to recover, sometimes longer.

### **Returning to sport and preventing wrist sprains**

You should not return to sport until the wrist is free of pain, supple and strong. For those sports that directly involve the wrist, it is important to 'warm up' first (exercises 1 - 3 may be used). Then gradually build up sporting activity.

Some activities such as football, rollerblading, skateboarding and skiing can put you at a greater risk of getting a sprained wrist. Wearing protective splints in these sports can help prevent many sprained wrists.

**If you are concerned about your progress, or if you have not improved within 10 days, we advise you to contact your GP or return to the Emergency Department/MIU department where you were seen.**

**If you are at all concerned about your injury please contact the relevant Emergency Department/Minor Injury Unit (MIU):**

**Royal Gwent Hospital: 01633 234056**

**Nevill Hall Hospital: 01873 732073**

**Ysbyty Ystrad Fawr (YYF) 01443 802353 or 802349**

**Ysbyty Aneurin Bevan (YAB) MIU: 01495 363318**

### **References:**

<https://cks.nice.org.uk/sprains-and-strains>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/sprains-and-strains/>

**“This document is available in Welsh /  
Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg”.**