

Advice for Acute Hand, Wrist and Elbow Injuries

Adopting a '**POLICE**' principle will help to reduce swelling and aid tissue healing.

Protection - This may be applied through taping/bandaging or through the use of a sling. It is important not to completely immobilise the joint if possible.

Optimal Loading - Early activity promotes early recovery. Move the injured area within your limits of pain and progress as your pain allows you to. A mild pain is to be expected but anything more indicates that you are doing too much.

Ice - Apply an ice-pack or frozen peas wrapped in a tea-towel over the affected area for 15 minutes, every few hours for the first few days.

Compression - Wear tubigrip/crepe bandage around the affected area whilst applying ice only.

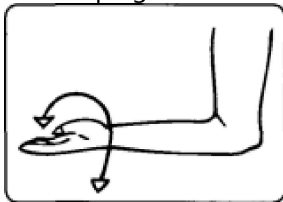
Elevation - Raise the affected area above the level of your heart for short periods of time while resting.

Exercise

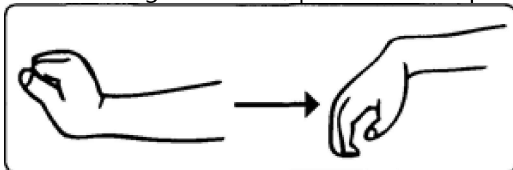
1. Start movements of the wrist, hand and elbow from the first day of injury (unless specifically instructed not to by a doctor or physiotherapist).

Do each movement 5 times every hour.

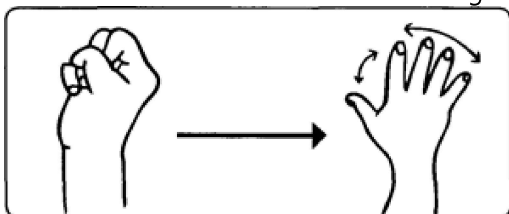
- Keeping the elbow bent and in by your side, turn the palm up fully and then down.



- Gently bend your elbow up and then try to straighten it fully - so that it feels '*locked*' straight.
- With fingers *relaxed*, pull the wrist up and then down fully.



- Make a fist and then stretch the fingers and thumb out *fully*.



- Touch the tip of the thumb to each fingertip in turn.



2. The doctor or nurse may provide you with a temporary sling. If so, remove the sling **3 times a day** to keep the

flexibility of the elbow and shoulder.

Do each movement 5 times.

- Stretch the elbow out *straight* and then bend it fully.
- Clasp your hands together and stretch both arms up above your head, keeping the elbows as straight as possible.

3. Try and use the hand for short periods of light activity throughout the day.

It is usual to take 1-2 weeks to settle, and longer before returning to full activity.

However, if movement, swelling or pain is not improving (or is worsening) within 3-5 days, please return to the Emergency Department for review.

Do not return to sport until you have a full, comfortable range of movement and normal activity - or as advised by your physiotherapist.

This information can be offered in other formats on request, including a language other than English and Braille.

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Reference Number: RDE 18 247 001

Version date: February 2019