

# Wrist sprain

## What is a wrist sprain?

Wrist sprain is a violent overstretching and tearing of one or more ligaments in the wrist. The ligaments around the wrist joint help to stabilise the position of the hand and allow controlled motions.

Wrist sprains are common injuries, especially in certain groups of people. Wrist sprains tend to occur after falls. Your risk of a sprain is increased if you have had a previous wrist sprain or injury. Participation in contact sports, such as boxing or wrestling, rugby and football increase your risk as well as poor physical conditioning (strength and flexibility). If this is a first-time injury proper care, and sufficient healing time, before resuming activity should prevent permanent disability.

## What are the symptoms?

Some common symptoms of a wrist sprain include:

- Pain with movement of the wrist.
- Swelling around the wrist joint.
- Bruising or discoloration of the skin.
- Burning or tingling sensations around the wrist.

## How is it diagnosed?

The diagnosis of a wrist sprain is made by knowing how the injury occurred and by physical examination of the injured area.

There are other wrist problems that can have similar symptoms to a sprain.

Your doctor will ask for an x-ray to ensure you have not broken the bones around the joint.

## How is it treated?

Initial treatment consists of medication and ice to relieve the pain, elevation to help reduce swelling and discomfort. A splint or brace may be recommended to provide support to the joint for varying times, depending on severity of injury. After immobilisation, exercises to stretch and strengthen the injured and weakened joint and surrounding muscles are necessary.

### Painkillers

Over the counter non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications such as Ibuprofen, or other painkillers such as Paracetamol, are often recommended. You should always read and follow the dosage information.

If you are in any doubt about taking painkillers please talk to your GP.

### Heat and cold

Cold is used to relieve pain and reduce inflammation for acute and chronic cases. Cold should be applied for 10-15 minutes every 2 to 3 hours for inflammation and pain and immediately after any activity that aggravates your symptoms. Use ice packs (wrapped in a tea towel, not put directly on the skin) or an ice massage.

Heat may be used before performing stretching and strengthening activities after the first 48 hours, use a heat pack, hot water bottle wrapped in a towel or a warm soak.

## What to look out for

Seek further medical advice if you experience:

- Pain, swelling, or bruising worsens despite treatment or you have persistent pain lasting more than 2 to 4 weeks.
- Pain, numbness, discoloration, or coldness in the hand or fingers or blue, gray, or dusky colour in the fingernails.
- New, unexplained symptoms develop.

## Wrist sprain 'range of motion' and 'strengthening' exercises

These exercises can be continued until your symptoms improve.

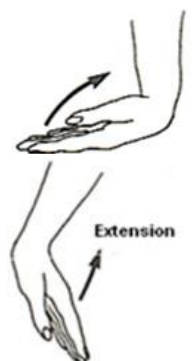
Remember: muscles that are strong and toned and flexible will be more able to cope with use during sport/daily life. Each stretch should be held for 20 to 30 seconds. A gentle stretching sensation should be felt.

### Wrist flexion

This exercise should be done with the elbow bent.

Hold your wrist with the fingers pointing down toward the floor. Pull down on the wrist until you feel a stretch.

Hold this position for 20 seconds. Repeat exercise once more.



### Wrist extension

This exercise should be done with the elbow bent.

Hold your wrist with the fingers pointing away from the floor. Pull down on the wrist until you feel a stretch.

Hold this position for 20 seconds. Repeat exercise once more.

### Supination

Stand or sit with your elbow bent to 90 degrees. Turn your palm upward as far as possible.

Hold this position for 20 seconds and then slowly return to the starting position.

Repeat exercise once more.

### Pronation

Stand or sit with your elbow bent to 90 degrees.

Turn your palm down toward the floor as far as possible.

Hold this position for 20 seconds and then slowly return to the starting position. Repeat exercise once more.



Supination



Pronation

### Further information

More information is available Clinical Knowledge Summaries:

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

### Tell us your views

If you wish to discuss any aspect of your treatment and care, please speak to a senior member of staff or to the nurse looking after you. The matrons are also available during normal working hours and they welcome your views.

### Friends and Family Test

Whatever your experience you can give feedback by answering the Friends & Family test question – How likely are you to recommend our A&E Department to family and friends if they needed similar care or treatment?

This can be completed online at <http://surveys.this.nhs.uk> using tag name **chftae** or by completing the form available within the department.

**If you have any comments about this leaflet or the service you have received you can contact :**

Manager

Emergency Department

Huddersfield Royal Infirmary

Telephone No: 01484 342396

[www.cht.nhs.uk](http://www.cht.nhs.uk)

or

Calderdale Royal Hospital

Telephone No: Halifax: 01422 222325

[www.cht.nhs.uk](http://www.cht.nhs.uk)

**If you would like this information in another format or language contact the above.**

Potřebujete-li tyto informace v jiném formátu nebo jazyce, obraťte se prosím na výše uvedené oddělení

Amennyiben ezt az információt más formátumban vagy nyelven szeretné megkapni, vegye fel a kapcsolatot fenti részlegünkkel.

Jeżeli są Państwo zainteresowani otrzymaniem tych informacji w innym formacie lub wersji językowej, prosimy skontaktować się z nami, korzystając z ww. danych kontaktowych

ਰ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਪ੍ਰਾਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ,  
ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਉਪਰੋਕਤ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور فارمیٹ یا زبان میں درکار ہوں، تو  
برائے مہربانی مندرجہ بالا شعبے میں ہم سے رابطہ کریں۔