

Hand Therapy for Finger and Wrist Fractures

Finger and wrist fractures are discontinuities in the bones of your finger or wrist. These bones are the phalanges, metacarpals, carpal bones, and distal forearm bones

Causes of finger and wrist fractures vary, with the most common cause being trauma (e.g. workplace related injuries, accidents and falls).

Without proper intervention, the fractures may not heal properly, leading to complications such as deformity, pain, stiffness and weakness. Finger and wrist fractures that are not well managed may also place the other joints at higher risk of arthritis.

While it is difficult to guarantee full function of the finger or wrist after a fracture, proper management ensures that the recovery is done in the safest way and within the shortest timeline, allowing fast return of the use of the hand.

How is it treated?

Occupational Therapists play a vital role in supporting the clinical team in fracture management. The hand surgeons first determine the need for conservative or operative treatment before relaying specific information to the Occupational Therapists on the therapy regime. In the event of open fractures or surgical requirements, the wound nurses also play an important role.

What does rehabilitation involve?

The main aim of rehabilitation is to allow proper healing of the fracture, and subsequently regain function through rehabilitation.

Occupational Therapists will fabricate a splint to restrict specific movement of the affected finger/wrist. Treatment then progresses to rehabilitative approaches involving finger and wrist exercises, functional re-training of the hand/wrist, and even work simulation. When necessary, heat, electric and ultrasound modalities are used to complement interventions.

The clinical team will make a referral to Occupational Therapists with a specific therapy regime. The Occupational Therapists will do a brief assessment on the current function and movement (as appropriate) of the injured upper limb before introducing the therapy regime. Future treatment plans and goals of therapy will then be set together with the patient. Patients are scheduled to return for subsequent appointments to chart their improvement and progress in their therapy programme.

Useful websites

[American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons: "General overview of hand fracture"](#)

[Mayoclinic: "General overview of wrist fractures"](#)