



# Distal Radius Fracture Nonoperative Treatment

## Patient Instructions

### Laith Al-Shihabi, MD

#### **0-2 weeks**

##### Pain medication:

- Use your prescription pain medication as needed to control pain.
- Do not drive or operate machinery while taking narcotic/opioid pain medication.
- Unless you cannot take them for other medical reasons, it is ok to use over-the-counter anti-inflammatory medication (e.g. Advil or Aleve) in addition to your prescription pain medication. Do not take tylenol as your prescription already contains this medication.

##### Cast/Splint:

- Keep the cast or splint in place full-time.
- Elevation of the hand, along with ice on-and-off for 20 minutes at a time, will help with swelling and pain.
- It is ok to shower, but the dressings must stay clean and dry. Place a waterproof covering over the dressings while bathing or showering (such as a heavy plastic bag that is sealed with Saran wrap).
- If the dressings get dirty, wet, or come apart please contact the office to have the dressing re-done.

##### Motion:

- Start moving and stretching your fingers and thumb as soon as possible.
- Work on moving your palm up (supination) and palm down (pronation), along with flexing and extending your elbow.
- You can use your hand for light activity, such as eating, drinking, or using a computer.
- Do not lift, carry, push, or pull anything heavier than a glass of water or can of soda.

#### **2-4 weeks (First check-up visit)**

##### Splint:

- The splint will be removed and you will be placed in to a cast

##### Motion:

- Therapy will be started for finger motion exercises if finger stiffness is a problem.
- Continue to avoid lifting, carrying, pushing, or pulling objects heavier than a glass of water.

#### **4-6 weeks (Second check-up visit)**

##### Splint:

- If the cast has been soiled or become loose, it will be exchanged for a new one. Otherwise, it is continued for another 2 weeks.

##### Motion:

- Continue finger motion exercises.
- Continue to avoid lifting, carrying, pushing, or pulling objects heavier than a glass of water.

### **6 -10 weeks (Third check-up visit)**

#### Splint:

-You will be transitioned from the cast to a removable wrist splint, to be worn for 2 weeks..

#### Motion:

- Therapy will be started in order to help regain wrist range of motion.
- Begin gentle finger and forearm strengthening.
- You can lift/carry up to 5lbs (about 1/2 gallon of milk) as your symptoms allow at 8 weeks.
- You can lift/carry up to 10-15 lbs starting at 10 weeks as your symptoms allow.

### **10-12 weeks (Fourth check-up visit)**

#### Splint:

-No longer necessary.

#### Motion:

- Continue motion exercises as part of a home-based program.
- You can lift and carry to tolerance.
- No activity restrictions after 12 weeks.

### **12+ weeks**

If needed, therapy can be continued to focus on further strengthening or work conditioning. There are no lifting/carrying or other activity restrictions after 12 weeks, unless otherwise discussed on a case-by-case basis.