



Metacarpal 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 your fingers and part of the thumb that is not in the splint 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.

4-6 weeks (First check-up visit)

Splint:

- You will be placed in to a removable brace if the fracture is healing appropriately.

Motion:

- Begin stretching exercises along with finger motion exercises.
- Continue to avoid lifting, carrying, pushing, or pulling anything heavier than a glass of water until 6 weeks.

6 -10 weeks (Second check-up visit)

Splint:

- Wean from the brace over 6-8 weeks as your symptoms allow.

Motion:

- Continue finger and wrist range of motion.
- Begin finger strengthening using putty.
- You can lift/carry up to 5lbs (about 1/2 gallon of milk) as your symptoms allow at 6 weeks.

-You can lift/carry up to 10-15 lbs starting at 8 weeks.

10-12 weeks (Third check-up visit)

Splint:

-Discontinue use of the splint altogether if you have not already done so.

Motion:

-Continue finger and wrist stretching.

-Continue grip strengthening.

-You can lift/carry up to 20-25 lbs at 10 weeks.

12+ weeks

No further therapy beyond normal use of the hand should be required at this point. There are no lifting/carrying or other activity restrictions after 12 weeks, unless otherwise discussed on a case-by-case basis.