

## Patient Factsheet

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# Exercises for arm and hand casts

## Why is this important?

Your wrist has been put in a cast to stop it from moving so the bones can heal properly. Because of your injury your arm might swell, your wrist become stiff and your muscles become weak. It is important to continue to move your arm gently so that it stays mobile.

If you have been given a sling, wear it only for the first one or two days. If you use a sling for a longer time your shoulder and elbow can become stiff and difficult to move. You can help to reduce the swelling by raising, or elevating, your arm. To do this, rest your hand on the opposite shoulder, or rest your arm on a pillow or pillows.

## What exercises should I do?

The following exercises can help reduce swelling and prevent stiffness and weakness. Aim to do them 4 times a day.



### Shoulder

For casts below the elbow

- Stretch your whole arm above your head.
- Hold this for five seconds.
- Repeat it five times.



### Elbow

For casts below the elbow

- Fully bend and straighten your elbow.
- Repeat this five times.



### Fingers

For casts above and below the elbow

- Fully clench your fingers to your palm or cast. Make sure all three joints of each finger are bent.
- Straighten your fingers completely.
- Repeat this five times.



### Thumb

For casts above and below the elbow

- Rotate your thumb in all directions, as far as you can within your cast.
- Repeat this five times.

## When should I go back to my GP?

You should go back to your GP if:

- Your pain, swelling, or stiffness gets much worse
- Your cast is too painful or seems too tight or too loose

*Adapted from Mackay HealthPathways*

This information is to be viewed by someone who has received a diagnosis from their doctor. It is not designed to be used to diagnose a condition or as a substitute for ongoing medical care

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