

# Discharge advice following a hand fracture

**i** Information for patients  
The Sheffield Hand Centre



**PROUD TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

SHEFFIELD TEACHING HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST





## What injury do I have?

You have a break in the bone, also called a fracture. This can be in the finger, thumb or hand. This will usually take about three to four weeks to heal and you may be in a soft or hard splint during this time

## How long will it take before I am able to use my hand as usual?

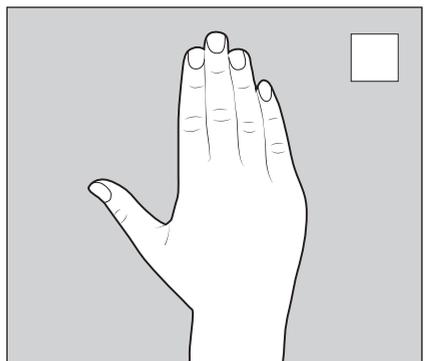
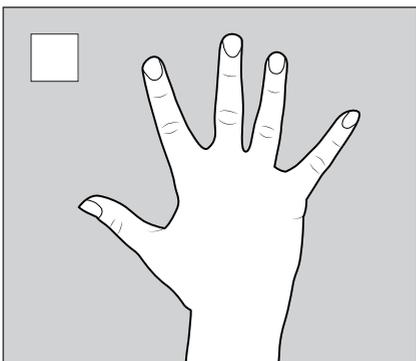
It is normal for your hand to feel stiff and sore. It may take six weeks or longer before your hand returns to normal.

## Is there anything I can do to help?

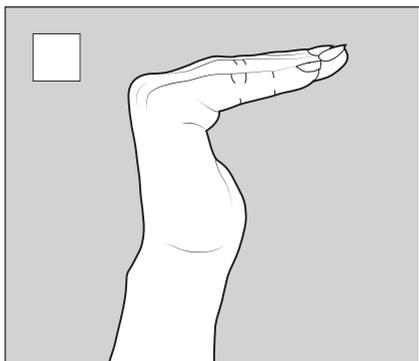
During the first few days following a hand injury it is best to keep your hand raised. This helps with swelling and discomfort.

It is important to move your hand and fingers regularly, even if it is uncomfortable. This is to help prevent the joints from becoming stiff.

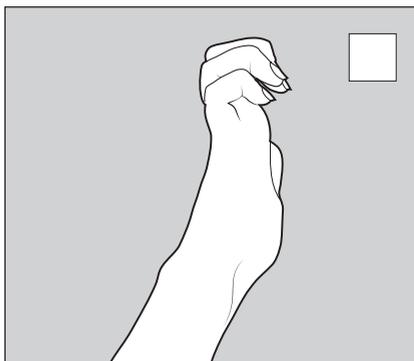
1. Keeping your fingers straight, bend at the knuckles.
2. Bend the tips and middle joints of the fingers, then straighten them.



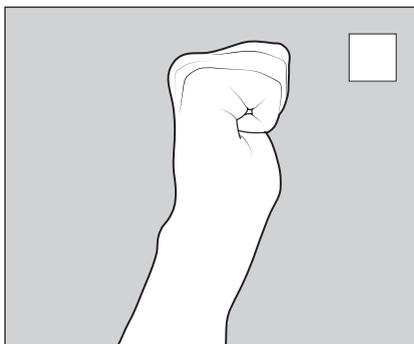
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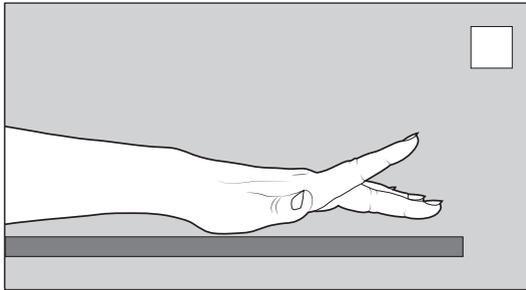
4. Bend the tips and middle joints of the fingers, then straighten them.



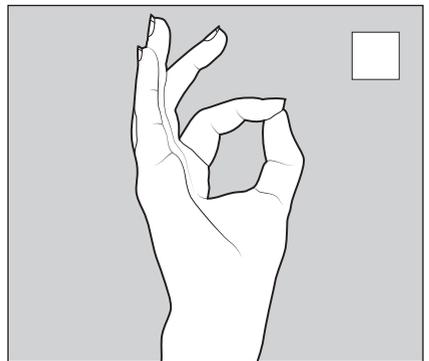
5. Make a fist, then straighten your fingers.



6. Place your palm on the table and lift each finger up.



7. Touch your thumb to each finger tip.



Finger strapping or a bulky bandage may help the pain and provide support so that you can move your fingers whilst the bone is healing.

If you are wearing strapping or a bandage this can be removed after 7-10 days, unless you have been advised otherwise.

### **Is there anything I should avoid?**

- While your fingers are strapped it is best to keep the tape/bandage dry.
- Use your hand as normally as possible but avoid heavy lifting and impact to the hand for 6 weeks.

## **When can I resume normal activities?**

### **Everyday activities**

Personal care will normally help get your hand moving, such as washing and dressing and holding a knife and fork. Gradually increase activities will allow the bone to heal. Avoid lifting heavy objects, such as kettle and manual work, for the first 8 weeks. Contact sports should be avoided for 8 weeks.

### **Driving**

You can return to driving when your bandage or splint has been removed, and you have enough movement and strength to grip, and can control a car safely. You will need to discuss this with your insurance company to ensure you have valid insurance. If you have been unable to drive for over 3 months you need to inform the DVLA.

## **What should I expect in the long term?**

- Hand grip normally recovers well after this type of injury
- As the bone heals, a lump will form at the break site
- The knuckle will not be as prominent as it was before the injury
- The appearance of your hand and finger may be affected in the long term. The changes in the way it looks does not mean there is a problem with using it

## Is there anything I should look out for?

- An increase in pain or swelling that does not settle
- Pain lasting more than 6 weeks
- The inability to fully straighten or bend the affected finger after 6 weeks

If you have any of the above mentioned issues then you can contact the Hand Therapy department on **0114 305 2381** or email **tsopd@NHS.net**

A receptionist will take your details and you will be contacted by a therapist.



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