

Distal Radius Fracture Fixation Post Operative Rehabilitation Protocol

Following Surgery:

- Expect a surgical bulky dressing and splint for 10-14 days.
- Elevate and ice for at least 3 days.
- Continue to elevate as often as possible until your next clinic visit. (Elevate above your heart.)
- Shower with a plastic bag covering the splint and seal with tape.
- Take your pain medication as needed and as prescribed. Call if any problems or questions arise.

10-14 Days Post Op (at therapy):

- Bulky dressing, splint, and sutures will be removed.
- Therapist will assist with edema control and scar management.
- Initiate finger, thumb, and shoulder Range of Motion (ROM) exercises.
- Expect a removable brace or cast while the fracture heals.
- **NOTE:** Immobilization period is typically 12 weeks, but is dependent on the location of the fracture, the bone graft utilized, the method of internal fixation, and the stability of fracture reduction after surgery. In some cases, immobilization may be necessary for as long as 6 months!

6- 8 Weeks Post Op:

- Follow up appointment in clinic with P.A. or M.D.
- Cast will be removed and new x-rays will be taken.
- Expect a new thumb spica cast or Exos brace.

12 Weeks Post Op:

- Follow up appointment in clinic with P.A. or M.D.
- Cast or brace will be removed and new x-rays will be taken.
- If healing has been established (as proven by confirmative x-rays with surgeon), cast or brace will be discontinued.
- If healing has not been established, may expect a clinic visit every 6 weeks with new x-rays until fracture healing is observed. (Occasionally, a CT scan is necessary to verify complete healing.)

Once healing is established:

- Begin therapy appointments focusing on active wrist ROM and gentle passive wrist ROM exercises.
- Initiate slow, progressive strengthening exercises.