

Full Wrist Fusion Post Operative Rehabilitation Protocol

Following Surgery:

- Expect a surgical bulky dressing and immobilization splint until fusion takes place (typically 8-10 wks).
- Immediately begin gentle finger motion following surgery to reduce swelling and to prevent stiffness during immobilization period.
- Elevate and ice for at least 3 days—expect moderate finger swelling!
- 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.

Precautions:

- Avoid lifting objects heavier than a coffee cup (no more than 5 lbs.) for the first 8 weeks.

10-14 Days Post Op:

- Follow up appointment in clinic with P.A., then therapy appointment same day.
- Bulky dressing and sutures will be removed.
- Cast to wear until fusion heals solid, usually 8-10 weeks.

8-10 Weeks Post Op:

- Follow up appointment in clinic with P.A. or M.D.
- Once fusion has been obtained, clamshell brace or cast may be discontinued.
- Begin isometric strengthening exercises, progressing to eccentric/concentric exercises.
- Scar mobilization techniques initiated.

12-14 Weeks Post Op:

- Follow up appointment in clinic with P.A. or M.D.
- May resume normal use of hand in daily activities.

Considerations:

- Expect no motion of wrist.
- May expect to lift full loads, with no limitations when well healed.
- The fusion plate will not be removed unless you are experiencing discomfort. Recommend waiting 1-2 years after surgery before removing the plate.
- May expect to maintain approximately 50-60% of normal wrist motion and 80% of normal grip strength in ideal cases, but may vary between patients depending on preoperative stiffness and initial course of injury.

