

# Radial Head (Elbow) Fracture

This leaflet can be made available  
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*如有需要，本传单可提供其他语言/版式  
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Na żądanie ta ulotka może zostać udostępniona  
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## Information for Patients

This is a follow up leaflet to your recent telephone consultation with the fracture care team explaining the ongoing management of your injury. Your case has been reviewed by an Orthopaedic Consultant (Bone Specialist) and a Physiotherapist.

### **You have sustained a fracture to your radial head.**

The radial head is one of the bones in your elbow. This normally takes approximately six weeks to heal.

During this period, it is important that you follow the rehabilitation plan on the following page. Following your rehabilitation plan will help to prevent further injury and help to improve your function. Completing the exercises is important to prevent your elbow from becoming stiff. However, the elbow joint does not respond well to being injured and you may have some long term stiffness, particularly when straightening your elbow. It is advisable to take your pain killers as prescribed to enable you to complete your exercises.

You can return to driving once your sling has been removed and you feel confident in safely controlling your vehicle.

If you are worried that you are unable to follow this rehabilitation plan, are experiencing pain or symptoms other than at the site of the original injury or surrounding area, or have any questions, then please contact us for advice using the contact details on the back of this booklet.

**Please see the picture below to understand where this injury is.**



## Smoking cessation

Medical evidence suggests that smoking prolongs fracture healing time. In extreme cases it can stop healing altogether. It is important that you consider this information with relation to your recent injury. Stopping smoking during the healing phase of your fracture will help ensure optimal recovery from this injury.

For advice on smoking cessation and local support available, please refer to the following website: <http://smokefree.nhs.uk> or discuss this with your GP.

## Management / Rehabilitation Plan

<b>Weeks since Injury</b>	<b>Rehabilitation Plan</b>
0-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Wear the sling for comfort only. Remove when completing exercises.</li><li>• Start Stage 1 Exercises.</li></ul>
2-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discontinue using the sling if you have not already done this.</li><li>• Begin normal light activities using your arm.</li><li>• If after 3 weeks you are not close to achieving full movement in your elbow please contact us for further advice / management.</li><li>• Avoid lifting more than the weight of a cup of tea for 6 weeks.</li><li>• Continue with exercises.</li></ul>
6-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fracture should be united (healed).</li><li>• Gradually resume normal activities as pain allows.</li><li>• Heavier or more strenuous tasks may still be difficult and cause discomfort at this stage.</li><li>• Symptoms will continue to improve over the next few months.</li><li>• If you are still experiencing significant pain and / or stiffness please contact us for further advice / management .</li></ul>

## Exercises

### Stage 1 Exercises (hourly)

#### Elbow bend & straighten

Bend and straighten the elbow of your injured arm so you feel a mild to moderate stretch. You can use your other arm to assist if necessary. Do not push if it causes pain.

Repeat 10 times.



#### Forearm rotations

Rest the elbow of your injured arm by your side. Bend it to 90 degrees. Slowly rotate your palm up and down until you feel a mild to moderate stretch. You can use your other arm to assist if necessary. Do not push if it causes pain.

Repeat 10 times.



#### Wrist flexion and extension

Move your wrist up and down.

Repeat 10 times





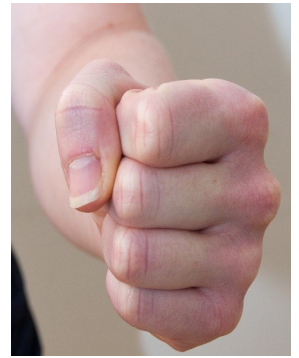
## Exercises

### Stage 1 Exercises Continued (hourly)

#### **Finger flexion and extension**

Open and close your injured hand, as shown.

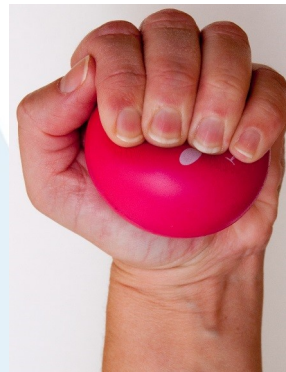
Repeat 10 times.



After a few days, hold a soft ball or ball of socks. Squeeze the ball as hard as possible without pain.

Hold for five seconds.

Repeat 10 times.



## Contact Information

**Fracture Clinic: 0151 430 4905 (9am-5pm Mon-Fri)**

**Emergency Department: 0151 430 2399**

Whiston Hospital  
Warrington Road,  
Prescot, Merseyside, L35 5DR  
Telephone: 0151 426 1600

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