

## Hand injuries

You have sustained an injury to your hand. The important thing with hand injuries is to control the swelling that will occur.

### The ways to do this are:

- **Wear the sling** supplied through the day for the next couple of days, and while the swelling persists.
- At night, **keep the hand high** by resting it up on pillows.
- **Keep the fingers and wrist moving** as described overleaf.
- Take the arm out of the sling several times a day to **exercise** the shoulder, elbow and wrist.
- **Ice-packs** may also be used to keep swelling down.

If you get some discomfort, painkillers such as Paracetamol are recommended.

**DO NOT REPLACE ANY RINGS UNTIL ALL THE SWELLING  
HAS COMPLETELY SETTLED DOWN**

# Hand exercises

It is important to keep your hand and fingers moving, despite your injury - otherwise the hand will become more painful and stiff.

Some general exercises are listed below, try to do some of these every hour - the motto is 'little and often' throughout the day.

## Exercises

1. Make a fist and then stretch the fingers straight. Do this 10 times.
2. Touch the thumb to each finger tip in turn, and then slide the thumb down each finger. Do this 10 times.
3. Bend the wrist forwards and backwards. Do this 10 times.
4. Tuck the elbow into your side, and turn your palm upwards and downwards. Do this 10 times.
5. Practice squeezing on a piece of sponge for 3 minutes.
6. Try to use the hand as much as the pain allows, especially for simple things like eating and dressing yourself.

If your hand is swollen, keep it elevated above your shoulder as much as possible. If you do not have any open wounds or stitches, then you may also soak your hand in iced water to reduce the swelling. Repeat the soakings every 2 hours for 10 - 15 minutes.

As the pain, stiffness and swelling improves, you may gradually reduce the amount of exercising and stop the iced soaks. Try to return to the normal use of your hand as soon as possible.

Call **111** for non-emergency confidential health care advice and information, 24 hours a day.  
*"Call 111 when it's less urgent than 999"*

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### Reference Code: P1125/0481/11.2012/VERSION4

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