

# Colles Fracture

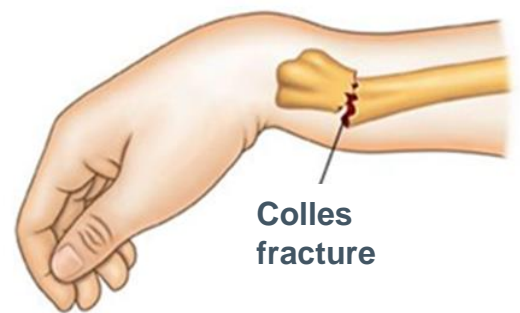
## Advice and treatment

A Colles fracture is a break in the radius bone of the forearm, just above the wrist.

### After your plaster is removed

Your wrist has been in plaster so that the bone ends can stay in the correct position and be protected while healing.

You may experience the following common effects when the plaster is removed.



### Dry and flaky skin

Twice a day, (provided that there are no unhealed areas) soak your hand in warm, dry well, and then massage with a moisturising cream e.g. E45, Aqueous, Nivea, to remove dry skin, improve the circulation and reduce any swelling.

### Swelling

Repeat the following regularly during the day to help reduce hand and wrist swelling.

- Elevate the hand, limit hanging the hand down by your side
- Pumping the hand regularly, raising and lowering the arm
- Apply frozen peas, in a damp towel, for up to 10 minutes – but do not place ice directly onto your skin. Do not use if you have any changes in sensation in your hand or wrist

### Pain

Pain can persist for up to a year after a fracture, though it should slowly reduce over time. Should the pain be severe or continuous, contact your GP for some prescribed pain relief.

### Weakness of grip

Grip strength is always reduced when you first come out of plaster because you haven't used your hand fully for a while, and the muscles are weakened.

Start with light activities to begin using your hand as normal as possible.

Be guided by your pain, and avoid any heavy lifting or carrying activities until your grip is stronger.

### Stiffness

It is normal for your joint to be stiff as it has been immobilised in the plaster for several weeks.

You may also find that your shoulder, elbow, fingers or thumb are stiff after weeks without exercise.

## Early mobilising exercises

Try these exercises 2-3 times a day. Stretching is normal, but if any are causing pain stop them.



Touch thumb to each finger tip in turn, stretching away from the fingers in between

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Support your forearm on a table as shown.

Move your hand up and down.

Repeat 10 times.



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Stand.

Bend your elbow and then straighten your elbow.

Repeat 10 times.



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Support your elbow on a table with your wrist straight and your fingers pointing towards the ceiling.

Make a fist (thumb over fingers). Straighten your fingers and bring them apart.

Repeat 10 times.



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Forearm supported on table, hold fingers and wrist straight.

Bend wrist first towards the little finger and then towards the thumb.

Repeat 10 times.



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Forearm on a table, palm turned down.

Alternately turn palm up and down keeping elbow still.

Repeat 10 times.



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Palm on a table.

Spread fingers and bring them together.

Repeat 10 times.



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Support your forearm on a table and hold a soft ball or sponge.

Squeeze the ball or sponge, hold for 5 seconds and relax.

Repeat 10 times.

You can find out more about broken arms and wrists from the NHS website

Visit NHS website [nhs.uk/conditions/broken-arm-or-wrist/](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/broken-arm-or-wrist/)

This leaflet is intended to support the advice you've received from your GP and Physiotherapist.  
The exercise diagrams have been created by Physiotools.

Visit Physiotools website [physiotools.com](https://www.physiotools.com)

## How to contact us

Visit our webpage [berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/physiotherapy](https://berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/physiotherapy)

**East Berkshire: Windsor, Maidenhead, Slough, Ascot, Bracknell**

Call [0300 365 5678](tel:03003655678)

Email [mskphysioadmin@berkshire.nhs.uk](mailto:mskphysioadmin@berkshire.nhs.uk)

**West Berkshire: Wokingham, Newbury, Reading**

Call [0118 9041 777](tel:01189041777)

Email [admin.rdgphysio@berkshire.nhs.uk](mailto:admin.rdgphysio@berkshire.nhs.uk)

