



Distal Radius Fracture- Post-Op Instructions After Your Surgery—Days 1–14

- **Diet** – Clear liquids, progressing to regular diet as tolerated.
- **Medication** – Take pain medication as instructed.
- **Dressing and splint care**
 - You'll have a bulky splint on your arm. This will stay in place until your follow up appointment
 - Do not remove your splint
 - Keep the splint clean and dry
- **Ice and elevation**
 - Use ice throughout the healing process.
 - Ice 30 mins at a time over the wrist area 4 times daily for the first 3-4 days then as needed
- **Sling-** a sling will be provided for comfort. It is ok to remove the sling anytime you would like. I recommend using the sling in public or around crowds at least for the first 2 weeks.
- **Activities**
 - No strenuous activity or heavy lifting until cleared by surgeon.
 - Wiggle fingers (piano fashion).
 - It's important to begin moving your wrist/fingers & elbow. Our goal is to have full finger flexion and extension by your follow-up appointment & full elbow motion.
- **Follow-up appointment** – You'll have a follow-up appointment in 10 to 14 days.

You should take the prescribed medication only as needed and as prescribed. If you are having increased pain, you may take an anti-inflammatory medication such as Advil, Motrin or Aleve with your pain medication but DO NOT take Tylenol WITH Norco (aka Hydrocodone) because it already has Tylenol in it. If you are not



taking Norco, you can take Tylenol in addition to advil, motrin OR aleve.

It is normal to have numbness around your hand. I placed lots of numbing medicine around the incision site to help with postoperative pain.

After Your Surgery — Weeks 2–4

- **Follow-up appointment**
 - Incision will be inspected.
 - Sutures will be removed.
- **Exercises** – 5 to 10 repetitions, 3 times a day
 - Range of motion exercises
 - Full motion of the elbow, hand and wrist is encouraged
 - We will begin gentle passive motion of the shoulder
 - Strengthening exercises
 - Squeeze a rubber ball
 - Wrist curls with or without weight
 - No lifting weights for a minimum of 8 weeks
- **Scar tissue management and desensitization**
 - Scar massage – Apply any vitamin E lotion or cream to your scar in a circular motion (firmly) for 5 minutes at least 2-3 times per day.
 - Desensitization – Rub the scar site for one minute every day.
 - Continue with scar massage for 6 months after surgery.

Scar Management and Desensitization

Two days after your sutures are removed, if the skin is completely closed, you will need to start massaging the scar. You will place your finger on the scar, and maintaining pressure move your finger in circles, diagonals, up and down, and side to side. Do this all along the

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length of the scar. Do not rub the skin, move the skin.

Over time, the scar tissue matures and becomes less pliable. As it tightens, scar tissue can:

- Interfere with achieving full range of motion
- Cause pain
- Cause hypersensitivity on or around the scar surface

Often, the surgical site/scar and surrounding tissue are left feeling hypersensitive because the scar tissue and swelling have interrupted your skin's sensory nerve fibers.

Performing scar massage and desensitization techniques can help your sensory nerves to normalize and function properly again.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I drive after surgery?

You may not drive yourself home from surgery. You must have a driver.

You may not drive when you are taking narcotic pain medication.

Your surgeon will tell you how long after your surgery until you can drive again. The legal position is that it's the patient who makes the decision as to whether you are safe to drive.

How long will I be off work after surgery?

When you can return to work depends on your progress, as assessed by your surgeon. Generally, you can return to work in 1 to 2 weeks.

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Call Immediately If You Experience

- Severe pain or swelling
- Nail discoloration from pink to white or blue
- Excessive bleeding or drainage
- Increased redness
- Fever of 101°F or greater

If any of these signs appear, consult your physician immediately

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