



# Upper limb (shoulder, hand, wrist, or forearm) exercises

## Information for patients from the Emergency Department

**Please speak to a healthcare professional before following the advice below**

You have injured your upper limb, and the doctor / nurse who saw you in the Emergency Department or Urgent Treatment Centre feels that the following exercises may help your recovery.

**These exercises are necessary to:**

- keep your shoulder, elbow, wrist, and finger joints from stiffening up
- maintain some strength in your arm and hand muscles; and
- minimise painful swelling by improving your circulation.

### Shoulder exercises

- Lift your arm out sideways and then high above your head. Repeat 10 times.
- Lift your arm forwards and then high above your head. Repeat 10 times.
- Lean forward, resting your good arm on a flat surface such as a table (exercise 1).
- Hang your bad arm down like a pendulum. Circle your bad arm 10 times one way and then 10 times the other way.
- Repeat until your arm starts to ache.



Exercise 1

**Shoulder, elbow, and wrist exercises must be done at least three times a day**

### Wall walking exercises

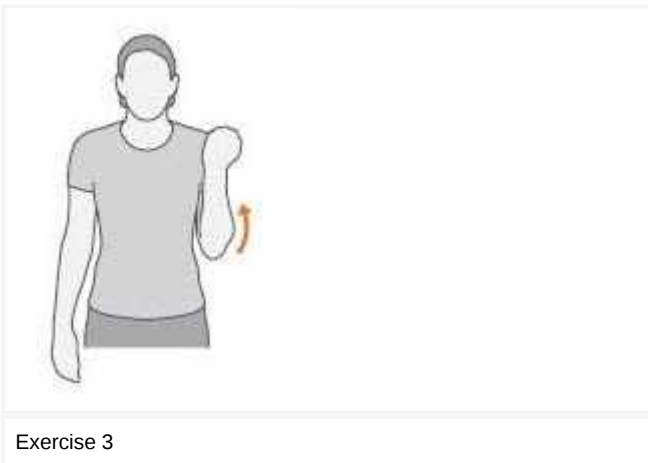
- Stand facing a wall.
- With your fingers resting gently on the wall, walk them up as far as you can (plaster allowing) (exercise 2).
- If your plaster feels heavy and your arm weak, do the exercise while supporting your injured arm with your good arm.



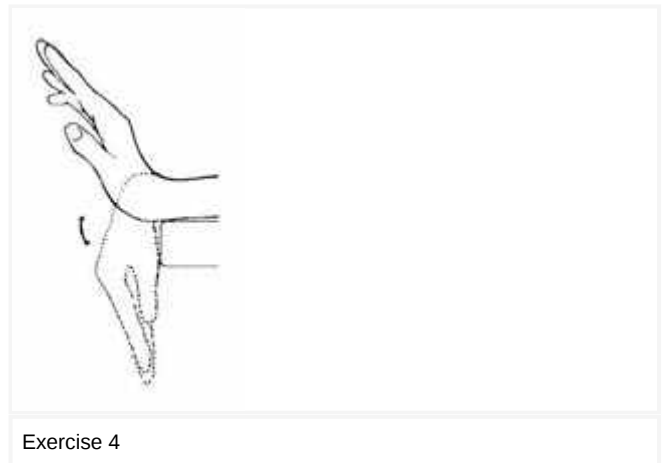
Exercise 2

### Elbow and wrist exercises

- Bend your elbow as far as you can, then straighten it (exercise 3). Repeat 20 times.
- Bend your wrist as far as you can, then straighten it (exercise 4). Repeat 20 times.



Exercise 3



Exercise 4

**Shoulder, elbow, and wrist exercises must be done at least three times a day**

### Finger exercises

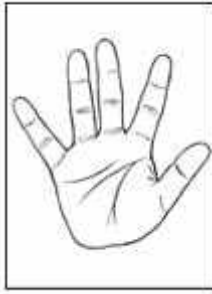
- Curl all four fingers into a fist, bending then as fully as you can. Straighten them right out. Repeat 10 times.

- Press your fingers together (see exercise 5a).
- Stretch your fingers out sideways, so there is a gap between each one (see exercise 5b).
- Press your fingers together again. Squeeze and relax. Repeat 10 times.
- Touch the tip of your thumb to the tip of your first finger. Squeeze and release. Repeat with each finger in turn (see exercise 6). Repeat 10 times.

**Finger exercises must be done every hour**



Exercise 5a



Exercise 5b



Exercise 6

### Please remember

- Take the painkillers recommended by hospital staff, to help with your pain and / or discomfort.
- You can use ice (or a cold flannel) to ease the pain, by wrapping crushed ice in a damp towel and placing it over your injury. Leave the ice in place for 10 to 15 minutes, then remove. Do this every two to four hours during the day, for at least three days.

**Caution:** ice can cause burns, so do not put it directly on your skin, always use a towel. Protect sensitive skin with baby oil.

**This leaflet has been produced with and for patients.**

If you would like this information in **another language, audio, Braille, Easy Read, or large print** please ask a member of staff. You can ask someone to contact us on your behalf.

**Any complaints, comments, concerns, or compliments** please speak to your doctor or nurse, or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01227 783145 (tel://+441227783145), or email [ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net](mailto:ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net) ([ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net](mailto:ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net))

**Patients should not bring large sums of money or valuables into hospital.** Please note that East Kent Hospitals accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property, unless the property has been handed into Trust staff for safe-keeping.

**Further patient leaflets** are available via the East Kent Hospitals website (<https://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/information-for-patients/patient-information/>).

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