

# Wrist Pain

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## What are common conditions and treatment for Wrist Pain?

Wrist pain is an extremely common complaint, and there are many common causes of this problem. It is important to make an accurate diagnosis of the cause of your symptoms so that appropriate treatment can be directed at the cause. If you have wrist pain, some common causes include:

### **Tendonitis**

Tendonitis is a common problem that can cause wrist pain and swelling. Wrist tendonitis is due to inflammation of the tendon sheath. Treatment of wrist pain caused by tendonitis usually does not require surgery.

### **Sprain**

Wrist sprains are common injuries to the ligaments around the wrist joint. Sprains can cause problems by limiting the use of our hands (see definition of sprains & strains).

### **Carpal Tunnel Syndrome**

Carpal tunnel syndrome is the condition that results from dysfunction of one of the nerves in the wrist. In carpal tunnel syndrome the median nerve is compressed, or pinched off, as it passes through the wrist joint.

### **Arthritis**

Arthritis is a problem that can cause wrist pain and difficulty performing normal activities. There are several causes of arthritis, and fortunately there are a number of treatments for wrist arthritis.

### **Ganglion Cyst**

A ganglion cyst is a swelling that usually occurs over the back of the hand or wrist. These are benign, fluid-filled capsules. Ganglion cysts are not cancerous, will not spread, and while they may grow in size, they will not spread to other parts of your body.

### **Fractures**

A wrist fracture is a common orthopedic injury. Injured workers who sustain a broken wrist may be treated in a cast, or they may need surgery for the fracture.

When do you need to call your doctor about your wrist pain?

If you are unsure of the cause of your wrist pain, or if you do not know the specific treatment recommendations for your condition, you should seek medical attention. Treatment of these conditions must be directed at the specific cause of your problem. Some signs that you should be seen by a doctor include:

- Inability to carry objects or use the arm

- Injury that causes deformity of the joint
- Wrist pain that occurs at night or while resting
- Wrist pain that persists beyond a few days
- Inability to straighten or flex the joint
- Swelling or significant bruising around the joint or forearm
- Signs of an infection, including fever, redness, warmth
- Any other unusual symptoms

What are the common treatments for wrist pain?

Treatment depends entirely on the cause of the problem. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that you understand the cause of your symptoms before embarking on a treatment program and should seek medical advice before beginning any treatment plan.

Some common treatments for wrist pain are listed here. Not all of these treatments are appropriate for every condition, but they may be applied in your situation.

#### **Rest & Activity Modification**

The first treatment for many common conditions that cause wrist pain is to rest the joint, and allow the acute inflammation to subside. It is important, however, to use caution when resting the joint, because prolonged immobilization can cause a stiff joint. Adjusting your activities so as not to irritate the joint can help prevent worsening of wrist pain. Your Rehabilitation Provider will assist in adjusting your work activities and negotiate the provision of suitable duties with the Employer.

#### **Ice and Heat Application**

Ice packs and heat pads are among the most commonly used treatments for wrist pain. So which one is the right one to use, ice or heat? And how long should the ice or heat treatments last?

#### **Wrist Support**

Support braces can help injured workers who have either had a recent wrist sprain injury or those who tend to injure their wrists easily. These braces act as a gentle support to wrist movements. They will not prevent severe injuries, but may help you perform simple activities while rehabilitating from a wrist sprain.

#### **Anti-Inflammatory Medication**

No steroidal anti-inflammatory pain medications, commonly referred to as NSAIDs, are some of the most commonly prescribed medications, especially for injured workers with wrist pain caused by problems such as arthritis and tendonitis.

#### **Cortisone injections**

Cortisone is a powerful medication that treats inflammation, and inflammation is a common

problem in injured workers with wrist pain. Discuss with your doctor the possible benefits of a cortisone injection for your wrist pain condition.

### **Vocational Rehabilitation**

This should begin as soon as possible after the injury. The Rehabilitation Provider will assist to identify suitable duties with the employer and in consultation with the treating medical provider, the injured worker, their supervisor and any other key person. The Rehabilitation Provider will prepare a return to work plan of action with the aim being a gradual and safe return to normal work duties. This plan will always include considerations directed by the Medical Provider and may include identifying any other requirements or services needed.