

# Wrist Sprain

Wrist sprains are common injuries for a number of different athletes. All it takes is a moment to lose your balance and as you slip, it becomes instinct to stick your hand out in front of you to prevent falling down. The force of the impact can bend the hand back and toward the forearm. This can end up stretching the ligaments connecting the wrist and the bones in the hand too far. The end result is small tears, and potentially torn ligaments or a fracture.

Wrist sprains can also occur from many other sports, including contact sports like martial arts and rugby, throwing sports such as javelin and shotput, and repetitive sports such as tennis.

## Wrist Sprain Anatomy

The wrist connects the forearm and the hand together. It consists of two bones in the forearm, the ulna and the radius, and eight smaller carpal bones. This unique arrangement provides you with a greater range of movement, including that of straightening, bending, rotation and lateral movement. Since this region is quite fragile, it is possible to injure any of these bones with any stress or force placed on them.

Repetitive stress can affect the wrist and cause injury. This can occur during injuries like sports, typing and other repetitive movements. The carpal tunnel is a tube of tendons and nerves passing through the wrist can become inflamed and thickened from repetitive stress. Sprains, strains and tendinitis are common injuries to the connecting tissues. Wrist pain might result from medical conditions like osteoporosis, which decreases bone density.

## How to Treat a Wrist Sprain:

### 1. Rest

Allow the wrist to rest for a minimum of 48 hours. Letting the joint refrain from movement and activities allows it the time it needs to recover from the sprain.

### 2. Ice

Apply ice to the affected area for 5-10 minutes at a time three to five times per day to help relieve pain and swelling. Make sure to wrap the ice in a thin towel to prevent an ice burn from occurring on your skin.

### 3. Compression

Using an ace bandage, wrap the wrist with a slight amount of pressure. This will help to minimize swelling in the affected area and keep it stable.

### 4. Anti-Inflammatory Medication

Taking a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medication will help to relieve swelling and pain in the wrist. Only use the medication on occasion, unless otherwise directed by your provider.

### 5. Elevation

Elevating the wrist above your heart level using a pillow or the back of a chair is good for keeping the swelling down. Try to do this as often as you are able to.

### Tips:

- Practice strengthening or stretching exercises to help restore movement and flexibility in the injury site.
- If you find yourself falling, try to avoid placing your hand out in front of you in an attempt to catch yourself. Rolling on to your side may help.
- Skiers are prone to these injuries, especially when falling and still holding onto the pole.
- If you are a gymnast, you want to do everything you can to protect your wrist when tumbling and doing other activities.
- For those who play sports, make sure to use the proper sports equipment to protect your bones and joints at all times and minimize injuries.



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