

WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER WRIST SURGERY

Dr. Erik Dorf

Distal Radius Fractures can be complex injuries, however, this type of surgery is common to my practice and I have found the results to be consistent and reliable. Keep in mind that every person responds differently to surgery and treatment, and your recovery may vary from the below outline. Typical factors which influence the recovery process include:

- Your age and health.
- The severity of your fracture/nature of your injury
- The length of time between the injury and the surgery
- Your compliance with prescribed treatment and therapy



1. ***SURGERY DAY:*** I will give you a copy of the x-ray of your surgically repaired wrist. You will be placed in a short splint, covered by an ace wrap. Your elbow and fingers will move freely. You will keep this on until your first follow up visit, which occurs at two weeks. Please do not remove the splint or get it wet. You may use a kitchen garbage bag and duct tape to keep it dry in the shower/bathtub.
2. ***FIRST 48 HOURS AFTER SURGERY:*** You should try to **elevate your hand and wiggle your fingers** as much as possible. Ice can also be used to reduce inflammation. I discourage the use of ibuprofen for the first two weeks after surgery.
3. ***FIRST TWO WEEKS:*** After surgery you should use your hand as much as possible for normal activities. **No heavy lifting.**
4. ***AT YOUR TWO WEEK POST OP OFFICE VISIT:*** We will change you into a cast. We do not get x-rays at your first visit. You are again encouraged to use your hand as much as possible after being placed in a cast. Again **no heavy lifting.**
5. ***ONE MONTH AFTER SURGERY:*** We will remove your cast and transition you into a brace. We will get x-rays at this time to monitor healing. You will wear the brace nearly full time for the following two weeks, and part time after that, specifically for more aggressive activities.
6. ***EIGHT WEEKS AFTER SURGERY:*** We will see you back in our clinic for a repeat exam at eight weeks after your surgery. We will repeat x-rays at that time.
7. ***THERAPY:*** If at any time during this treatment course it appears you will require therapy to help decrease swelling, or improve range of motion you will be provided with a prescription for therapy. Approximately half of our patients require some sort of therapy.
8. ***HOW LONG TO GET BETTER?*** Most people are **mostly** better by 10 to 12 weeks after surgery. No one is completely better at this time, but you can typically return to all your normal activities.
9. ***HOW LONG FOR FULL RECOVERY?*** It usually takes people **six months to a year** before they can expect full improvement after having surgery to fix a distal radius, and you will likely continue to improve for up to two years.

Should you have any questions, please call any of our offices at the following numbers:

Edwards (970) 569-3240

Frisco (970) 668-3633

Vail (970) 476-7220