



Distal Radius ORIF Therapist Protocol DAVID GESENSWAY, MD

WEEK 1:

- Patient is in post-op splint
- Patient to elevate the arm and do finger exercises frequently with the goal of full digit mobility within the week.

WEEKS 2-3: START THERAPY 5-7 DAYS AFTER SURGERY.

- Fabricate custom circumferential Orfit wrist hand orthosis (2/3 of the way up the forearm, nice open thumb area, ulnar opening unless ulna fixation was needed and ulnar incision is present. Patient to wear their splint full time like a cast.
- Splint can be removed for showering, sutures can get wet.
- Finger exercises should be done every 1-2 hours to help reduce swelling and regain full finger motion. Pt to remove splint 2-4 times per day to do AROM ex's (see Phase 2 exercise sheets).
- Arm should be elevated frequently this week will help reduce swelling.
- Sutures will be left in for one more week.
- Encourage light, functional use of the hand (eating, typing, etc.), lifting less than 1 lb. No firm gripping/pulling/pushing.

WEEK 4:

- Patient to see MD for clinical exam and first x-ray
- Patient to start PROM and putty strengthening (see Phase 3 exercises)
- Wrist strengthening exercises start at 6 weeks post-op (see Phase 4 exercises)

WEEK 7:

- Discontinue custom splint
- Full functional use as tolerated

OVERALL TIPS:

- If the patient has minimal swelling and quickly masters the exercises, they may need just 3-4 visits over the first 2 months. If your patient has more swelling or stiffness that slows their progress, they may need 10-12 visits.
- Encourage patients to regain functional use of the hand as quickly as possible.