

# Arm or leg in plaster cast

Holbæk Sygehus, Akutafdelingen



## Exercise programme

Repeat every exercise 15 times and perform the exercises 4-5 times daily.

In a sliding movement, bend first your outer and middle joints, then tubercles to full hand knot. The knuckles of the fingers must bend completely. Then extend and spread your fingers completely.

Gather and spread your fingers. Be sure to keep your fingers straight.

Move the tip of the thumb to the tip of each of the other fingers, one by one.

Move the thumb in an arc as far away from the palm as possible to reach the root of the little finger. You need to form a large 'O' with each of the fingers. Stretch your fingers out between each 'O'.

Bend and stretch the elbow. In general, remember to move the shoulder. Lift and lower the shoulders and swing your arm around in large circles.



Holbæk Sygehus  
Akutafdelingen  
Smedelundsgade 60  
4300 Holbæk

E-mail: [hol-akut@regionsjaelland.dk](mailto:hol-akut@regionsjaelland.dk)

Afdelingstelefon: 59 48 38 00

Skadetelefonen: 1818

[www.holbaeksygehus.dk/afdelinger/akutafdeling](http://www.holbaeksygehus.dk/afdelinger/akutafdeling)

## Your arm or your leg is in a plaster cast

The purpose of the plaster cast is to keep the fracture stable until healed.

### Important information

- the cast must not get wet. Use a plastic bag over the cast when showering
- the cast must not break. If it happens, contact Skade-telefonen on tel. 1818
- avoid covering the cast with a blanket or duvet for the first 24 hours, until the cast has dried up completely. The faster it dries, the stronger it will be
- never use knitting needles or other sharp, pointed or hard objects to scratch under the cast. You may tear your skin and risk an inflammation

**Please note:** It is irresponsible to drive a car or other motor vehicle with your arm or leg in a cast.

### Pain and swelling

The cast must not strain or bother you. To reduce pain and swelling, you may raise your cast as often as possible – your arm preferably above heart level or your leg above hip level.

You can prevent pains by taking a painkiller, e.g. Paracetamol with Ibuprofen. Dosage as instructed on package.

## Arm in a cast

For the first 24 hours, you can have your arm supported in a sling to protect the cast. You may take the sling off, when lying in bed. You should only use the sling for the first 24 hours.

You must not carry heavy burdens, as long as you wear a cast, but it is important to use your hand when doing your daily chores as e.g. getting dressed, eating etc.

### *Exercises to reduce reactions*

Swelling may cause a pricking sensation in your fingers. If this occurs, it may help to hold your hand up high and move your fingers.

If you have a throbbing pain, or your fingers turn blue, white or cold, you should contact Skadetelefonen on 1818.

*Movement increases blood circulation, strengthens the muscles and reduces swelling. See back for exercises.*

- For the first few days you should lift your hand high above your head for about one minute every hour, till the swelling has gone
- Move your fingers, elbow and shoulder, as shown on the back
- The movements must not result in pains from the fracture. You should then exercise less vigorously

## Leg in a cast

Under no circumstances should you walk or touch the ground with a fresh cast. It is not sufficiently strong, and it will break!

### *Reactions*

Swelling may cause a prickling sensation in your toes. If this occurs, it may help to raise your leg above hip level.

If the cast seems too tight, and it does not help to raise the leg, your toes may turn blue, white or get cold (compared to the opposite leg). If you experience this, you should contact Skade-telefonen on tel. 1818.

*Movement increases blood circulation, strengthens the muscles and reduces swelling*

Perform the following exercises 6 times after each meal:

- a full cast (to the hip): While standing, raise your leg to a level position
- a reduced cast (to the knee): Bend and stretch your knee joint. The movements must not result in pains in the fracture. You should then exercise less vigorously.

## After-care and control

Your own doctor must remove the cast in \_\_\_\_ weeks. Do not forget to make an appointment.

In some cases, there will be a need for after-care/control at the orthopaedic outpatient clinic (Ortopædkirurgisk Ambulatorium). Your medical record together with your X-rays will be reviewed (the following weekday) at an X-ray conference attended by several doctors. If they find reason to change the original plan, we will contact you by telephone. If you need treatment at Ortopædkirurgisk Ambulatorium, you will be contacted via your e-boks or by letter with your new plan.

In case you after 7 days have not been contacted, you should ring and make an appointment on tel. 59 48 44 70, weekdays 8.30am-1pm.

### In need of an aid?

If you after discharge or ended emergency room treatment find you are in need of an aid to manage your daily activities in your home (e.g. toilet, bath), please contact the municipality you live in.

### Questions

You are quite welcome to contact Skadetelefonen on tel. 1818 or your GP, if you are in doubt of any aspect of the treatment.