

# Slievemore Physiotherapy Acupuncture & Sports Injury Clinic & Slievemore Pilates

## ‘Putting people in motion’

The new decade has brought many familiar problems to Slievemore Physiotherapy and Acupuncture clinic. A number of our patients have sustained varying degrees of injuries such as fractures, sprains and joint dislocations. The bad weather in December and January has caused injuries to young and old people alike. A&E departments around the country are inundated with such injuries as a result of simple slips and falls.

Therefore we have decided to dedicate our first newsletter to fractures. If you have any queries regarding this or any other matter please do not hesitate to contact one of our Chartered Physiotherapists.



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## What is a fracture?

If more pressure is put on a bone than it can stand, it will split or break. A break of any size is called a fracture.

A **simple fracture** involves a single fracture line through a bone. A **comminuted fracture** is one in which the bone has been fractured into two or more fragments. An **open fracture** is one in which the fractured bone penetrates the skin.

A **stress fracture** is a hairline crack in the bone that develops because of repeated or prolonged forces against the bone. An example of this is David Beckham's famous left foot when he had a stress fracture to his second metatarsal bone.

**Greenstick fractures** occur in children. This is when the less brittle bones of a child tend to buckle with an injury to the bone rather than break.

If a fracture is suspected, the patient should be taken to an A&E department. Ice packs may be helpful to relieve pain. A fracture is usually confirmed by an X-Ray.

## Fracture Repair

Recovery of the bone depends on the condition of the bone, the presence or hopefully absence of infection, the state of the blood and nerve supply, and presence of other injuries. Fractures usually heal in 6 weeks. Children's bones heal rapidly.

## What are the treatment options for a fracture?

The three main treatment options for bone fractures are:

- ◆ **Casting** ó such as Plaster of Paris. This involves holding the bone in a stationary position to allow the bone to heal. This is the most common treatment for a fracture.
- ◆ **Open reduction (surgery) and internal fixation**- this involves a surgery to hold the bone together to allow the fracture to repair. Metal rods, screws, plates or wires are used to hold the bones in place and remain after the surgery, under the skin. This is used for fractures that can not be held in place by a cast. These are used quite often.
- ◆ **Open reduction (surgery) and external fixation**- this involves a surgery to insert a device that holds the bone in place to allow the fracture to heal. In this case part of the device is outside the body. This is generally used for multiple fractures to a bone such as shattered shin bone. These are used less frequently.



## Physiotherapy & Fractures

Physiotherapy rehabilitation can start as soon as the bone is held in place, usually with a cast (Plaster of Paris). Physiotherapy initially involves advice about positioning of the limb, teaching exercises to avoid muscles wasting and more importantly to prevent other joints from stiffening up while the heavy plaster is on. In the case of wrist fractures, it is important that the shoulder is used normally to prevent a frozen shoulder, especially if it was injured in the fall. Also, slings used to support the arm or after a fractured collar bone put pressure on the neck resulting in pain.

**More active rehabilitation** begins when the fracture has healed and the cast removed. This usually occurs after 6 weeks. At this stage the focus of treatment is to reduce swelling, restore the normal range of movement and strength to the joint(s). The treatment is completed when the person can return to their full activities.

**Exercises** will nearly always be given to maintain and increase what is achieved in treatments.

Each Physiotherapy Rehabilitation programme is tailored to suit each person's injury, needs and lifestyle. We liaise directly with the various hospitals, clinics and consultants to seek more information regarding the fracture and particularly if the recovery is not progressing as we expect.

If you require any further information please contact your Chartered Physiotherapist directly or if you are unsure if we can help with a problem ask anyway. We are more than happy to help. In the meantime, **Happy New Year.**

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