

Distal Radius Fracture Rehabilitation Protocol
(open reduction internal fixation - ORIF)

- **Weeks: 0-6**
 - Goals: prevent stiffness, decrease swelling/inflammation, and protect fixation
 - Splint/cast to remain in place for 2 weeks, then transitioned to removable Velcro wrist splint
 - Non-weightbearing with upper extremity
 - Start formal therapy 2-6 weeks from date of surgery, at discretion of provider based upon fracture and type of immobilization required
 - Encourage ROM of fingers and shoulder (also elbow if not immobilized in cast/splint)
 - Modalities as needed for muscle stimulation, pain control, swelling control
- **Weeks 6-12**
 - Goals: improved swelling and pain, increase ROM, begin strengthening
 - Maintain non-weightbearing with extremity; okay for using phone, keyboard, etc. as needed while in splint/cast; nothing more or heavier; okay to increase to 5 lb. limit starting in week 10
 - Begin gentle active wrist ROM in all planes in week 6, passive to begin in week 10
 - Continue ROM of fingers and shoulder
 - Modalities as needed for muscle stimulation, pain control, swelling control
 - Emphasize importance of home exercise/ROM program
- **Weeks 12+**
 - Goals: increase ROM, develop strength, return to work, sport, and/or pre-injury functional level with minimal to no restrictions
 - Begin to slowly wean from removable Velcro splint, and eventually discontinue when comfortable doing so
 - Continue improving wrist ROM in all planes
 - Continue advancing weightbearing/lifting restriction as tolerated; this can take weeks to months for strength to return
 - Work on improving functional/ADL tasks as needed
 - Functional/work-specific/sport strengthening and training, if applicable
 - Customized HEP to continue once PT/OT is completed
 - Full functional return takes 6 months to 1 year

