



SCAPHOID FRACTURE

ABOUT

The scaphoid bone is one of eight small bones that make up the carpal bones of the wrist. It is located near the base of your thumb, and is involved with wrist movement.

The scaphoid is one of the most commonly broken bones in the body. A broken scaphoid or “scaphoid fracture” is a type of wrist fracture. The most common cause is falling over onto an outstretched hand. For example, you might fracture your scaphoid from tripping over while playing soccer, falling off a skateboard or tripping over in the street. Sometimes the injury doesn't seem very serious at all.

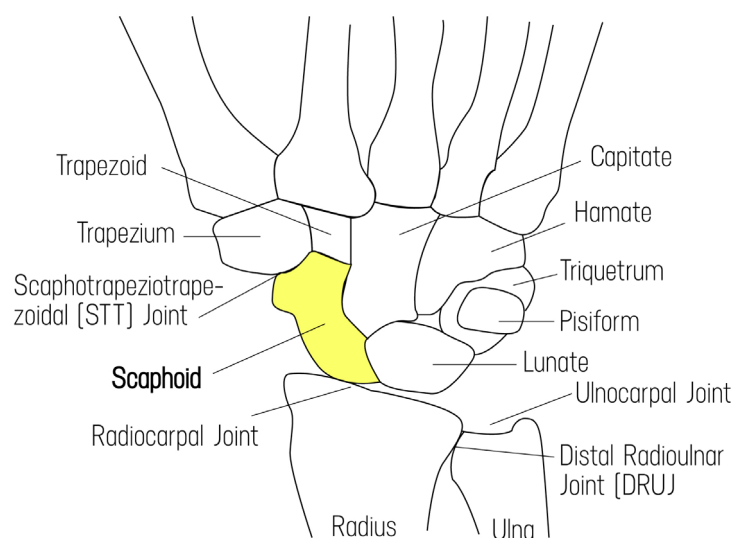
SYMPTOMS

Scaphoid fractures are not always very painful and often you will still be able to move your wrist. For this reason, a lot of people dismiss their injury as “just a sprain”. The main symptoms of a scaphoid fracture are pain or tenderness in your wrist near the bottom of your thumb and pain with pinching. Sometimes there might be some swelling or bruising, but not always.

If you think you might have fractured your scaphoid, you should see a doctor. A scaphoid fracture can often be diagnosed with an x-ray – but not always! Sometimes scaphoid fractures don't show up on x-rays for the first week or two. In that case, the doctor may want you to have another x-ray a week or two later, or arrange a different type of scan.

The treatment for a scaphoid fracture depends on exactly what type of break it is. Some scaphoid fractures require surgery. Other scaphoid fractures can be treated without surgery. A specialist hand or orthopaedic doctor will be able to advise you on whether surgery is required or not.

CARPAL BONES



HOW HAND THERAPY CAN HELP

Hand therapy is an important part of the treatment for any scaphoid fracture. In most cases, you will need to wear some type of cast or brace to hold your wrist still and allow the fracture to heal. Therapists will be able to fabricate and apply the right cast, brace or orthosis (support) for your particular injury and lifestyle. Scaphoid fractures often take a long time to heal, so you will usually have to wear the cast or orthosis for about six to eight weeks (sometimes longer, depending on how the healing is going).

Hand therapy is also important after your scaphoid fracture has healed. Usually, after your wrist has been immobilised for an extended period of time it will feel quite stiff and weak. Therapists can assist to get the wrist moving again by showing specific exercises to be completed to assist regaining movement and strength as quickly as possible. They will guide you in your recovery so that you can get back to doing all the things you love, whether that's football, gardening, driving or playing the guitar.

In summary, if you have a scaphoid fracture, hand therapy can help! Your therapist can:

- Apply a comfortable cast, orthosis or brace
- Prescribe a personalised exercise program to get the movement back into your wrist and to build up your strength
- Monitor and measure your progress as you recover
- Help with pain and swelling
- Give you the right advice about what you should and shouldn't be doing at every stage of your rehabilitation
- Get you back to your sports and hobbies as quickly and safely as possible



*HAND THERAPY IS THE
ART AND SCIENCE OF
REHABILITATION FOR THE UPPER
LIMB - SHOULDER TO HAND*

*The Australian Hand Therapy
Association provides support
for its members through
continuing education, professional
development, networking and
representation at
state and national levels.*

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