

Advice after breaking your toe (phalanx)

Fracture Clinic Patient Information Leaflet

Your injury

A fracture is the same as a break in the bone. Your toes are all made up of small bones and each of these is called a 'phalanx'. You have fractured a phalanx in one or more of your toes. This is a common fracture.

The usual symptoms following this type of fracture include:

- Pain straight after an injury
- Swelling
- Bruising
- Difficulty moving the toe and walking



Your treatment plan

You can put weight through the injured foot immediately and most people manage to walk without too much discomfort in supportive shoes. Some people may be given a removable boot to wear and/or have the injured toe taped to the neighbouring toe for support. The boot should be used when walking for two to six weeks (it is not needed at rest or at night) and you can leave the tape in place for up to two weeks.

These fractures almost always heal well with time and therefore follow up clinic appointments are not normally needed.

What should I do at home?

- Use over the counter pain killers as required.
- Elevate the injured foot when resting to help reduce swelling
- Use ice over the injured area to help with pain and swelling – an ice pack or a bag of frozen peas wrapped in a tea towel can be used for 10 minutes at a time. Be careful if you have diabetes or any problems sensing feeling in the foot.
- You should not drive whilst wearing a boot. You may drive an automatic car if you have injured your left foot.
- You can return to work as soon as you are able to do your normal duties.

How long will it take to heal?

Most fractures heal without any problems in about six weeks. However, it may take three to six months for your symptoms to settle completely – these can include pain or discomfort, stiffness, decreased strength, and swelling. The bones may take longer to heal if you suffer from diabetes or if you smoke.

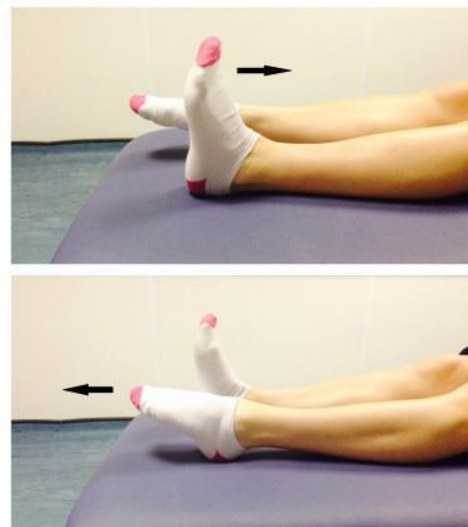
For advice on stopping smoking please visit www.nhs.uk/smokefree or discuss this with your GP.

Exercises

You should try to do these exercises three to four times a day, you can start them immediately.

Ankle and foot range of movement exercises. Repeat these ten times each:

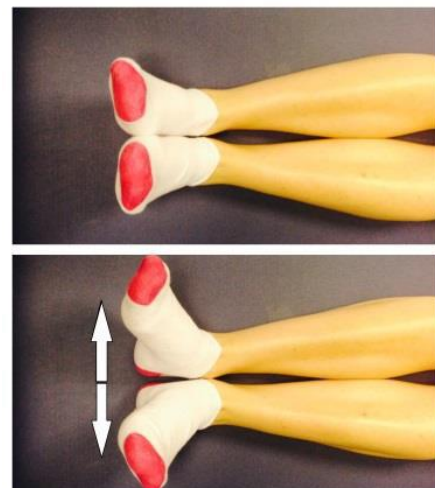
1. Point your foot up and down within a comfortable range of movement.



2. Make circles with your foot in one direction and then change direction.



3. With your heels together, move your toes apart, as shown in the picture



If you have any worries or concerns please contact one of the following:

Virtual Fracture Clinic Helpline 01225 821668 or Fracture Clinic 01225 825602

Trauma and Orthopaedic Department

Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust
Combe Park, Bath BA1 3NG
01225 428331 www.ruh.nhs.uk

Please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) if you require this leaflet in a different format, or would like to feedback your experience of the hospital. Email ruh-tr.PatientAdviceandLiaisonService@nhs.net or telephone 01225 825656.