

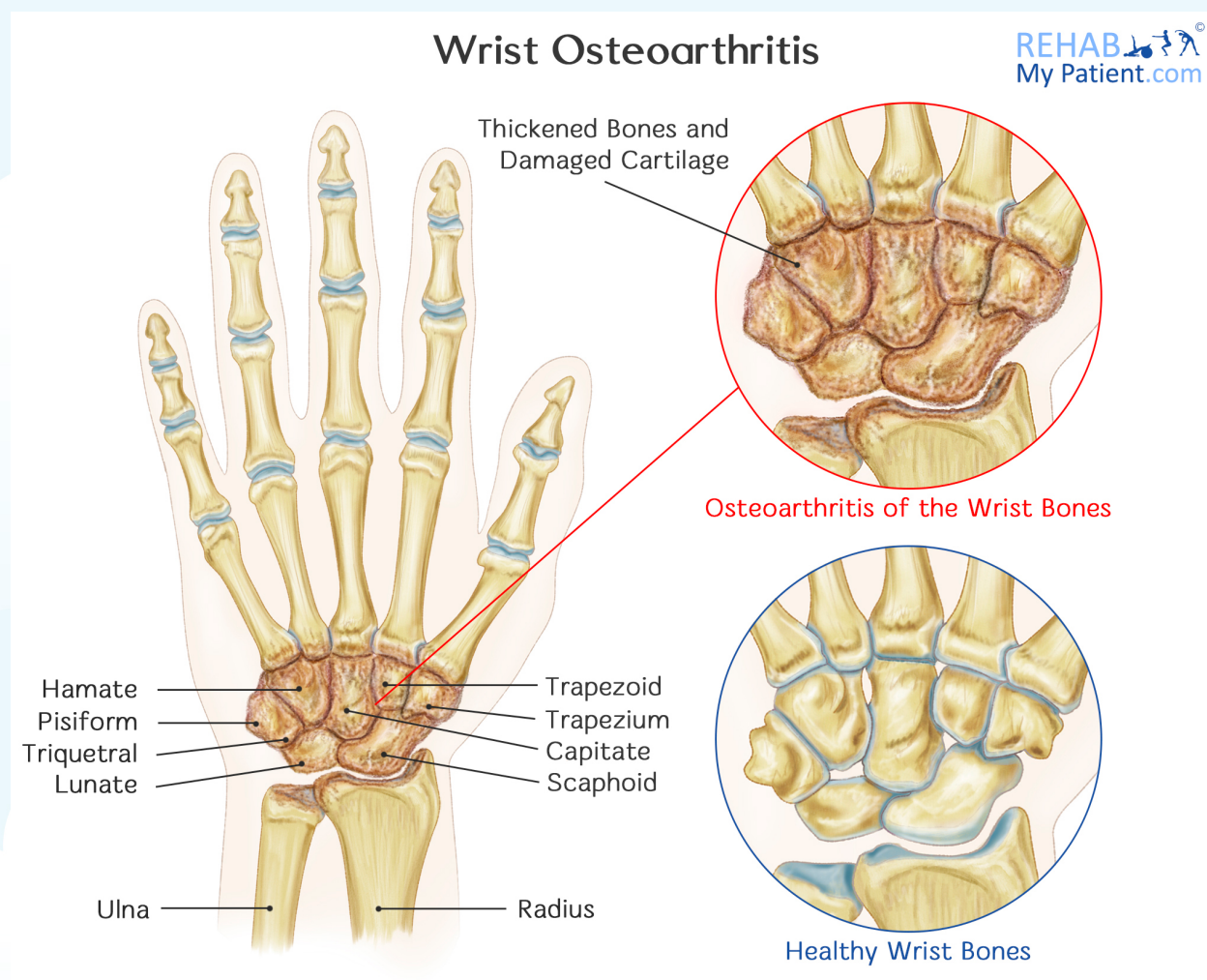
Wrist Osteoarthritis

Osteoarthritis affects millions of people throughout the world. Osteoarthritis is when one or more of the joints in your body degenerates. Joints are where the bone ends meet. Inflammation will cause stiffness, pain and swelling in the joint. A large amount of people have osteoarthritis in their hands and wrists, which makes it more difficult to perform regular activities.

Even though there are a lot of different types of arthritis, wrist pain is often attributed to osteoarthritis. This type of arthritis is a progressive condition destroying the smooth cartilage covering the bone's ends. Healthy joints can easily move because of the articular cartilage. For those who have osteoarthritis, the cartilage will be worn away. When bare bones are rubbing against one another, it causes pain, weakness and stiffness to occur.

Wrist Osteoarthritis Anatomy

The wrist connects the forearm and the hand together. It consists of two bones in the forearm, the ulna and the radius, and eight smaller carpal bones. This unique arrangement provides you with a greater range of movement, including that of straightening, bending, rotation and lateral movement. Since this region is quite fragile, it is possible to injure any of these bones with any stress or force placed on them.



Repetitive stress can affect the wrist and cause injury. This can occur during injuries like sports, typing and other repetitive movements. The carpal tunnel is a tube of tendons and nerves passing through the wrist can become inflamed and thickened from repetitive stress. Sprains, strains and tendinitis are common injuries to the connecting tissues. Wrist pain might result from medical conditions like osteoporosis, which decreases bone density.

How to Treat Wrist Osteoarthritis:

1. Modification of Activities

Stopping or limiting the activities that cause the pain to worsen is the first step in relieving your symptoms.

2. Immobilization

Keeping your wrist still and protect for a short length of time using a splint will help to alleviate some of your symptoms.

3. Ice and Heat

It is much better than taking anti-inflammatories as it is natural and local. There are lots of ways to use ice and heat, and your therapist will guide you on the best procedure. However, one possible technique is to fill a basin with cold water, and place your hands and wrists inside for 2 minutes, then empty it and fill it with hot water, and place your hands in for 2 minutes, then empty it and repeat with cold water. This contrast bathing is a useful way to reduce inflammation.



4. Exercise

Following an exercise program that was prescribed by the doctor or therapist is important. Specific types of exercises can help to improve movement in the wrist. Strengthening exercises can prevent further problems.

5. Steroid Injections

Cortisone is a powerful anti-inflammatory medication that can easily be injected into the wrist.

Tips:

- If your symptoms get worse or you are struggling to cope, you need to review your treatment program with your doctor or therapist. Your doctor may ask you to see an orthopaedic consultant, or a rheumatologist.
- Discuss various alternative medicines with your provider. Some therapies can help to reduce the pain from arthritis. Things to consider are acupuncture, water/hydro therapy, or electrotherapy.
- If the joint is too badly degenerated, you might need to consider having joint replacement done to retain movement in the wrist.
- Osteoarthritis can develop from normal wear and tear in the wrist, especially in those who have a family history of the disease.