



## WRIST INSTABILITY

### ABOUT

The wrist is a complicated joint, which relies on a fine balance of four main areas working together to maintain a pain free, stable, strong, functional wrist. The four areas are:

1. Intact and smooth bony alignment of the wrist bones (carpal bones)
2. Ligament stability (strong stabilising structures that hold bone to bone)
3. A strong and well-functioning muscle support system
4. A well-functioning proprioception system (receptors in your wrist which act to tell the brain where the wrist is in space, regulate pressure in function and help protect against injury)

A loss of two or more of these stabilising factors can cause instability, pain and restricted range of movement of the wrist. If not treated correctly these can worsen over time and cause further injury and pain in the wrist.

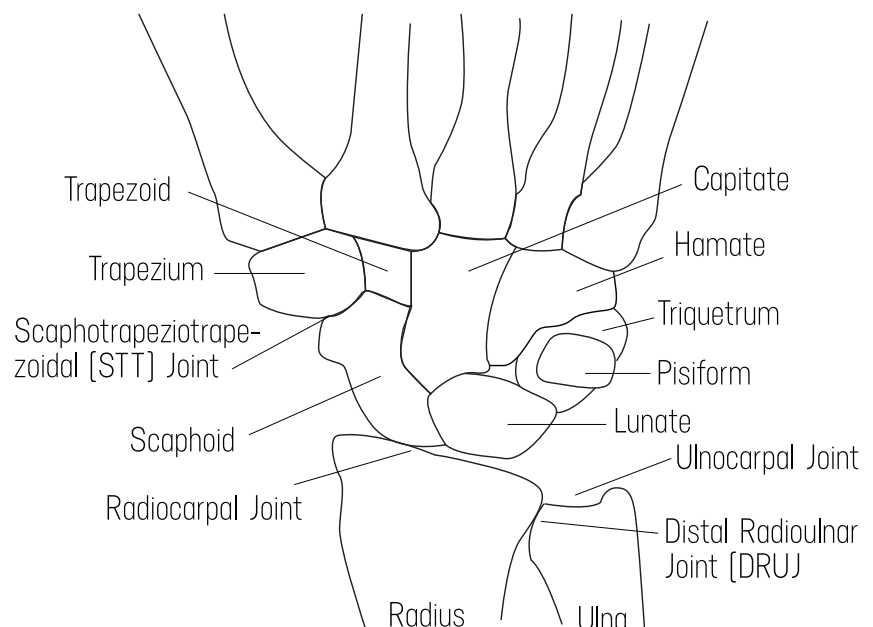
#### Common injuries of the wrist that can lead to wrist instability include:

- Scapho-lunate ligament injuries
- Carpal bone fractures
- Luno-triquetral ligament injuries
- Midcarpal ligament injuries

### SYMPTOMS

- Pain through the wrist with functional use and with movement of the wrist, especially at the end range of movement
- Swelling
- A clunk or clicking sensation with movement – can be painful or non-painful
- Difficulty or pain with weight bearing or loading of the wrist, especially with it bent backwards
- A feeling of an unstable wrist
- Weakness in gripping objects and a tendency to drop objects
- Reduced range of movement

### CARPAL BONES



# HOW HAND THERAPY CAN HELP

Your therapist can complete a thorough assessment to provide information of possible injuries that will help guide your therapy. They can advise you on treatment options based on this assessment, including the possibility for further investigation, or if you require a specialist hand surgeon to review your case. Treatment options may include the following:

- Supportive splinting, whether to help with healing your injury or assist with the pain and/or support the joint for functional use
- Immobilising the wrist, or restricting the range of movement, may be required to rest the injured structures and allow for healing to occur
- An exercise program to help with building up certain areas of your wrist. There are many exercises that can be undertaken for your wrist and vary significantly depending on your symptoms and treatment goals. These exercises will aim to:
  - Increase stability of the wrist
  - Increase strength of the wrist and grip strength
  - Increase proprioception of the wrist
  - Decrease pain
  - Prevent further injury
- Education including advice and recommendations for alterations in your occupation and everyday environment to assist with your injury rehabilitation. Areas that can be discussed are:
  - Activity modifications
  - Pain management techniques
  - Ways of avoiding further injury
  - Management and avoiding overuse

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

*The Australian Hand Therapy  
Association provides support  
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continuing education, professional  
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state and national levels.*



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