Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Clavicle Fracture (Adult)

Version number: **1**
Last modified date: **12th November 2026**

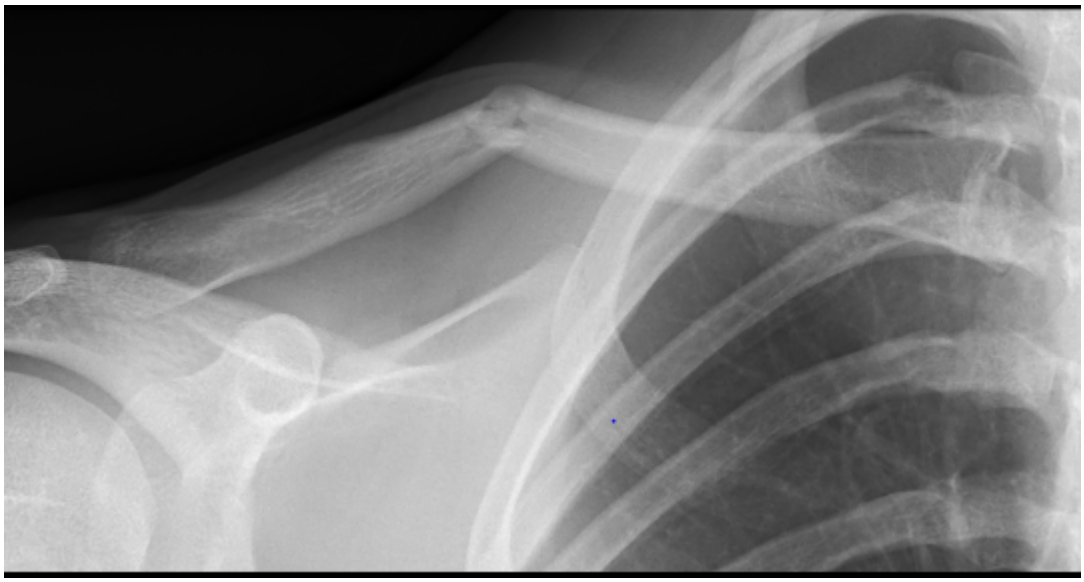
Patient Information

Trauma & Orthopaedic Department

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Introduction

A fractured clavicle (broken collarbone) is a common injury. This fracture usually takes around 6 weeks to heal.



Symptoms

Often very painful; other symptoms can include:

- Swelling or tenderness around the injured area
- Bruising to the skin
- A visible lump at the fracture site.

The shoulder may appear slumped. This is due to the broken collarbone no longer providing support to the weight of the arm.

Recovery

Collarbone breaks often heal naturally, using a simple sling for support for 2 to 6 weeks. The sling can then be removed, and the arm used as pain allows. Take the arm out of the

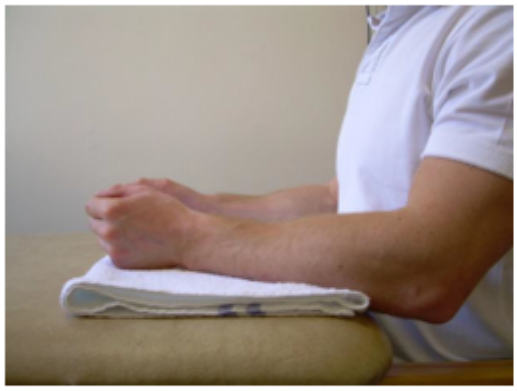
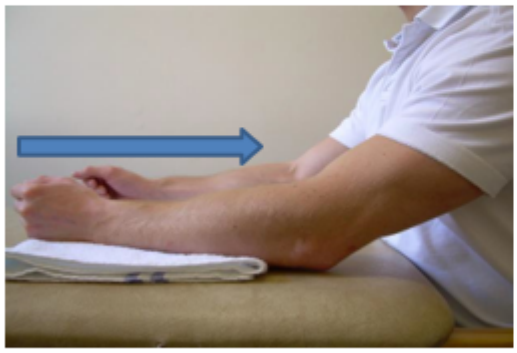
sling several times a day to straighten the elbow.

- Take simple painkillers e.g. paracetamol for as long as you need to; do not take more than the recommended dose. Your local pharmacist is a useful source for pain relief information.
- Smoking slows down healing. We advise you to stop. Please talk to your General Practitioner (GP) or go online at **https://www.nhs.uk/smokefree**
- It may be more comfortable to sleep sitting upright; this can be done using extra pillows.

Exercises

Aim to get the shoulder moving as soon as possible. Try raising the arm to the chest height if you can. By week 6 you should be able to reach your hands above your shoulders. Maybe start with the table slides exercise below.

Table Slides

	• Sit at a table or stand at the kitchen work-top • Rest your hands on a towel (with your palms facing inwards).
	• Watching your elbow crease, slide the towel forwards with both hands • Only go forwards whilst your elbow is moving • Pause.
	• Return by sliding your elbows and hands back, watching the crease • As you feel more comfortable, as you pull your elbows back towards you, you can lean your body forwards over your elbows. This will help them bend further.

Things to expect

During the healing process, the body forms new bone (callus) around the fracture site. A lump/bump may develop over the collarbone. Please do not be alarmed, this is a normal part of the healing process and may remain forever.

Disclaimer

Not all exercises are suitable for everyone, and while precaution has been taken in selecting these exercises, they do not come without risks. If you have any concerns regarding your injury, or whether you should partake in the exercises, then you should consult your GP or Physiotherapist before beginning any exercises in this leaflet.

It is quite normal to feel some discomfort following exercise, but it is important that this discomfort eases within 2 hours of finishing the exercise and does not have an overall negative effect on your symptoms.

The exercise plan shown in this leaflet is designed to be used as a guide and a point of reference; they can be modified and progressed under supervision of your Physiotherapist.

Frequently asked questions

Driving

You must not drive with a sling on. It is your own responsibility to ensure this. You are allowed to drive when:

- You can safely control the car
- You can use the steering wheel/gear stick safely
- You can perform an emergency stop.

Work

This depends on your individual situation. You can return to work when you feel able to do your job. Consider a phased return where needed/possible.

Sports

You should not play sport until you are pain-free and have full movement in your shoulder.

Further Advice

If you have any concerns regarding your shoulder, contact:

Fracture Clinic Helpline 01942 822595 please leave a message with your name, telephone number and a brief description of the reason for call your call, and we will aim to call you back within 24 hours Monday to Friday 8.30am until 5pm (please note it will be Monday if you call over the weekend).

If you have any urgent concerns out of hours, please call 111.

Adult MSK Physiotherapy Self-Referral

If you are struggling to regain your movement or get back to normal activities, you can self-refer to **Physiotherapy**. A referral form can be found on this webpage:

https://www.wwl.nhs.uk/adult-msk-physiotherapy-self-referral



Please scan the QR Code to access the website.

Telephone Numbers:

Boston House Health Centre Telephone 0300 707 1113

Leigh Infirmary Telephone 0300 707 1597 / 0300 707 1595

Platt Bridge Health Centre Telephone 0300 707 1772



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