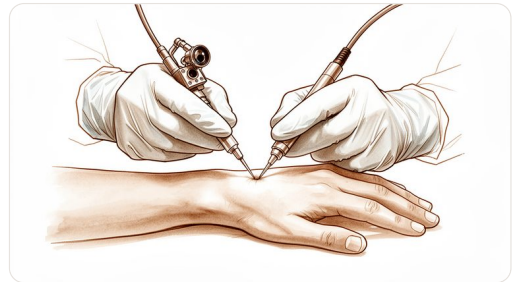


Wrist Arthroscopy

Wrist arthroscopy — a minimally-invasive way to inspect and treat the inside of the wrist joint.

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What you're feeling

You likely have persistent pain in your wrist that has not gone away. This pain often flares up after you use your hand for daily tasks. Simple activities like reaching behind your back to fasten a bra or tucking in a shirt may become difficult or impossible. You might find it hard to lift objects or turn a doorknob.

The pain often feels worse when you wake up in the morning. It can also bother you at night, making it hard to sleep on the side of your injured wrist. Even though the procedure is safe, most patients continue to have some pain and disability after one year. You may expect about 50% improvement in your pain and disability within that time, but moderate levels of discomfort often remain.

Your surgeon uses this procedure to look inside your joint and find the cause of your trouble. They can treat issues like torn ligaments or instability that you cannot feel but that limit your movement. While the surgery helps many people, it is important to know that you might still experience some ongoing symptoms.

What's actually happening

Your wrist is a complex joint held together by a sleeve called the joint capsule and strong bands of tissue called ligaments. These ligaments act like ropes that keep your bones aligned. When you injure your wrist, these ropes can tear or stretch. You might also damage the triangular fibrocartilage complex, which is a shock absorber made of tough cartilage and ligaments. This area often gets hurt alongside other stabilizing structures in your wrist.

Sometimes, the smooth coating on your bone ends wears down or gets damaged. This wear-and-tear arthritis creates rough surfaces that rub together, causing pain and stiffness. In some cases, a fracture breaks the bone inside the joint. This can lead to scar tissue forming inside the joint capsule, making it hard for your wrist to bend or straighten. Your surgeon uses small cameras and tools to look inside these tight spaces to find exactly where the damage is.

The problem is that standard scans sometimes miss these deep tears or small fractures. A negative scan does not rule out injury to the shock absorber or the ligament ropes. This is why your surgeon needs to look directly inside the joint. By using special portals, your surgeon can see the articular surfaces and detect soft-tissue injuries that other tests cannot find. This direct view allows for precise treatment of the specific damage you are feeling.

What we can do about it

Your journey usually starts with self-management and physiotherapy. Your surgeon may suggest exercises to keep your wrist moving and strengthen the muscles around it. This approach aims to reduce pain and improve how you use your hand. You should give this non-surgical care a fair chance before considering other steps.

If simple measures do not help, your surgeon might discuss medical management. This can include pain medication or anti-inflammatories to calm the swelling. In some cases, injections like cortisone, hyaluronic acid, or PRP are used to relieve symptoms. These treatments can provide relief, though the effect may not last forever.

Surgery is considered when conservative care reaches its limit and pain persists. Wrist arthroscopy is a safe procedure that allows your surgeon to look inside your joint and treat specific problems. It is used for conditions like ligament tears, joint instability, or cartilage damage. While many patients improve by approximately 50% at one year, most will still have some pain and disability after that time. Your surgeon will discuss if this advanced treatment is right for your specific wrist disorder.

When to see someone

Ask for a specialist review if you have persistent wrist pain that does not improve with rest. Seek help if you notice weakness, instability, or your wrist locks and gives way. Contact your surgeon if symptoms interfere with your sleep or work, or if you experience a sudden worsening of pain. While wrist arthroscopy can help diagnose and treat many conditions, most patients still have some pain and disability after one year. You may expect about 50% improvement in pain and disability within one year, but moderate levels often persist.