

Preventing Baby Wrist

Healthcare Specialist, Tony Kochhar, Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon explores Baby Wrist and the rise of RSI in mums

Baby wrist is a condition that can develop in parents and carers of newborn babies.

Typically, baby wrist affects ladies soon after the birth of their first baby. In preparation for childbirth, the body releases strong hormones (relaxin and oxytocin in particular), which loosen the ligaments and tissues around the pelvis enabling the baby to be delivered.

However, these powerful chemicals also affect similar tissues around the body. Baby wrist occurs because of overuse of some of the tendons and ligaments around the wrist from new and prolonged activities (such as holding the newborn child or feeding) and leads to severe strains of these tissues.

What affects baby wrist?

If the newborn child in your care has colic, you may have to hold them for long periods of time with your

arms, wrists and hands in the same strained position. Bottle feeding babies, pushing prams and generally running around after children can also add to the strain put on your wrists.

How does it feel?

Classically, baby wrist develops as a deep aching pain along the thumb side (radial) of the wrist. It is worse when lifting objects and this aching can spread up to the elbow with pain even when doing simple tasks such as lifting a kettle or a cup of tea. In severe cases there can be intense swelling over the back of the wrist and your sleep can be affected.

Tony's top tips for preventing baby wrist:

1 Keep changing the position of your wrist and hand - it often feels odd holding your child with the other arm but you have to give the irritated tissue in your wrist a rest.

2 Perform some gentle stretches for your wrist - when tissues become irritated they become scarred and this can lead to stiffness. Gentle stretches prevent this from progressing and will aid in your recovery.

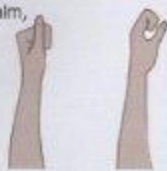
3 Use a hot towel - if your wrist feels stiff when you get up in the morning, wrap a hot towel around it until the towel cools. This increases blood flow to the area, improving healing and makes the lubricating fluid more effective.

4 Get it checked out - the sooner you see a specialist and start some simple treatment the sooner it will get better. What starts as a simple ache can develop into severe pain that can affect your sleep and daily routine, even the ability to hold your child. However, this can be treated very effectively and quickly and surgery is almost never required.

Tony's top tips to avoid Shoulder and Baby Wrist:

Finger Stretch

- 1 Make a fist, ensuring your thumb is straight, not tucked under the fingers
- 2 Slide your fingertips up the palm, with the tips of your fingers moving towards the base of your fingers, until a stretch is felt
- 3 Hold this position for a slow count of 10
- 4 Repeat the process three to five times



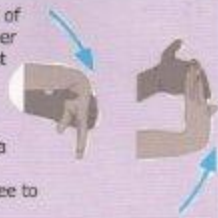
Ulnar - Radial Deviation exercise

- 1 With your hand open and facing down, move your wrist from side to side, until a stretch is felt at each extreme
- 2 Hold each position for a slow count of 10
- 3 Repeat the process three to five times



Wrist flex - extend

- 1 Holding the upper part of your hand with the other hand, slowly bend the wrist down and then upwards until a stretch is felt at each extreme
- 2 Hold each position for a slow count of 10
- 3 Repeat the process three to five times



Supination - Pronation exercise

- 1 With your elbow held close in to the side of your body, slowly rotate your palm upwards and then downwards until a stretch is felt at each extreme
- 2 Hold each position for a slow count of 10
- 3 Repeat the process three to five times

