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Wrist Surgery: Arthroscopy

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Subject=Wrist%20Surgery%3A%20Arthroscopy&body=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.asssh.org%2Fhandcare%2Fcondition%2Fwrist-surgery-arthroscopy) (<https://www.asssh.org/handcare/condition/wrist-surgery-arthroscopy>)

Wrist arthroscopy is a wrist surgery that allows a doctor to see the inside of a joint. It is performed after a patient sustains an injury such as a fall or a twisting pain, clicks or swelling. These symptoms may mean there is an internal problem of the wrist. Arthroscopy is often the best way of directly looking at the injury be used to help align fractures of the wrist, remove some [ganglions](http://www.asssh.org/handcare/hand-arm-conditions/ganglion-cyst) (<http://www.asssh.org/handcare/hand-arm-conditions/ganglion-cyst>) of the wrist, wash out (<http://www.asssh.org/handcare/hand-arm-injuries/infections>), or remove excess joint lining associated with inflammation from conditions like [rheumatoid art](http://www.asssh.org/handcare/hand-arm-conditions/Rheumatoid-Arthritis) (<http://www.asssh.org/handcare/hand-arm-conditions/Rheumatoid-Arthritis>).

In the last five years, the wrist (Figure 1) has become the third most common joint to undergo arthroscopy, after the knee and shoulder. Because the cuts used disrupt less soft tissue than typical surgery, pain, swelling and stiffness are minimal, and recovery is often faster.

Procedure

Your doctor can see the ligaments and cartilage surfaces of bones with wrist arthroscopy. Some parts of ligaments have a good blood supply and can be repaired. Others do not have a blood supply and don't heal, so they are removed.

During the procedure, a small camera fixed to the end of a narrow tube is placed through a small cut in the skin directly into the back of the wrist joint (Figure 1) for better viewing. Several small cuts are used to allow the surgeon to place the camera in a number of positions to see the cartilage of each lining called synovium.

Risks

Risks of this wrist surgery can include but are not limited to:

- Infection
- Damage to nerves, tendons or cartilage
- Stiffness or loss of joint motion

Stiffness can be addressed post-surgery with rehabilitation.

Recovery

After your surgery, you will be placed in a bandage that may prevent wrist motion. This will protect the area and provide pain relief. Arthroscopy most likely does not require a cast. Fingers should move freely, and finger movement is often encouraged to limit swelling and stiffness. Your surgeon will provide instructions on caring for and any work or exercise restrictions. Elevating the wrist is important to prevent swelling and pain after wrist surgery.

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Figure 1

The anatomy of the wrist is shown here



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Figure 3

By introducing the instruments on the back of the hand, the surgeon can view and operate on the cyst without a large cut during this wrist surgery.



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