

# Joseph J. Schreiber MD

Hand, Wrist and Elbow Surgery  
SchreiberMD.com

# RALEIGH ORTHOPAEDIC

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## Post-Operative Instructions

(Carpal Tunnel, Cubital Tunnel, Trigger Finger, de Quervain, Ganglion Cysts, Tennis Elbow, Biopsies)



1. **Elevate.** For the first 2 days, try to keep your hand above your heart as much as possible to minimize swelling (use pillows!). Less swelling will result in less pain. If the bandage feels too tight, you may re-wrap it if necessary.



2. **Motion.** Continue to gently use your fingers; prolonged lack of motion can cause long-lasting stiffness. Work on intermittently opening and closing the hand into a fist. While motion is encouraged, avoid any heavy lifting. Listen to your body – if it hurts, don't do it!



3. **Medication.** Take your prescribed pain medication with food to minimize nausea. Consider over-the-counter medications like Senna and Colace if you have any constipation issues. To minimize narcotic use, take ibuprofen or naproxen (NSAIDs) in addition. Try to wean off narcotics as quickly as possible. Unless specifically told otherwise, resume all of your normal medications after surgery. There is no need to stop any blood thinners before or after surgery.



4. **Bandage.** Keep your bandage clean and dry for 3 days after surgery - cover it when bathing. After 3 days, you may remove the bandage. At this point the incision may get wet when bathing. Allow water to run over it and gently pat it dry. No lotions/creams are necessary. You will see DermaBond (super glue) and blue ink from a marker – this is normal. Leave the glue in place. Do not pick at it; ideally it will remain for  $\geq 10$  days.



5. **Redness.** It is normal to see redness around the incision. It is typically about the width of your thumb, and it is a sign of your body's inflammation process for healing. Actual infections are rare, and result in expanding redness throughout the hand and arm with fever, and pus draining from the incision (as opposed to a small amount of clear fluid, which is normal).



6. **Driving.** Do not drive a vehicle until you are off pain medication and you feel that you can safely and normally handle the vehicle.



7. **Diet.** There are no dietary restrictions, but it is generally advisable to start with lighter meals and foods.



8. **Follow-up.** Call (919) 781-5600 (ext. 5621) to schedule a follow-up visit approximately ~2 weeks after surgery if needed. If any issues arise before that visit, call the same number and you will be directed appropriately.