

Orthopaedic Trauma

Occupational Therapy Advice

for People in a Cast



Occupational Therapy Department
Royal Hospital for Children and Young People,
50 Little France Crescent, Edinburgh EH16 4TJ

Tel: 0131 312 1037 (Mon-Fri 8.30pm – 4.30pm)

Occupational Therapy

Occupational therapists help people to take part in their daily activities as independently as possible. Daily life is made up of many activities and Occupational Therapists call these “occupations”.

Occupations for children or young people might include:

- self-care - such as getting dressed, eating a meal, using the toilet
- being productive - including playing, going to nursery and school
- leisure - such as playing sport or doing hobbies.

When to contact us

- If you can't sit down/stand up from the toilet without support, or have any other issues accessing a toilet, please contact the Occupational Therapy Team at RHCYP Edinburgh on **0131 312 1037** to discuss ways we can help. This service is available Monday - Friday 9.30-3.30.
- You might need some equipment to help you with toileting once home. This is often provided by your local Occupational Therapy team. We can contact them for you.

Here's some advice and tips to make everyday tasks easier after you have broken a bone:

Washing

- You may wish to buy a waterproof cover to cover your cast. This will let you have a shower or sink wash without getting your cast wet. There are many types and brands available to buy.
Practise using the cover on someone without a cast first to make sure it's completely water tight. Be very careful with covers on leg casts, as they can be slippery. Don't use plastic bags to cover casts as they can let water in
- When washing your hair you might need some help. If you're washing at the sink rather than showering you may want to try standing with your back to the sink and tilt your head back (like you would at the hairdressers).

Dressing

- To start with you may need to ask a family member or friend for help getting dressed
- Choose stretchy clothes that fit easily over bulky casts
- Try using trousers without zips or buttons, which are baggy enough to fit over a leg cast easily
- Dress your injured arm or leg first, before dressing the other side
- Choose clothes with pockets, so you can carry a phone when you're using crutches
- You can buy some small aids to help with dressing, such as long handled shoe horns and sock aids
- Finally, avoid any movements that hurt when getting dressed.

Getting around at home

- Clear a wide path through each room and remove any clutter/obstacles to make moving around easier
- You may find it difficult to sleep at first, but most people find it gets better after a few nights. Resting your cast on a pillow may help
- Think about night lights/ leaving lights on if you tend to get up during the night.

School/College/Work

- If your cast is on the arm you write with, it might be hard to write. Ask your teacher if you can dictate notes, use a scribe or talk through your answers
- If your cast is on your non-writing arm, use a heavy object or book to hold your paper in place
- If you're on crutches ask for access to the lift, if there is one, and extra time to move between classes.