

Dr. Michael Potter

Surgical Wrist Fracture Playbook



Valley Ortho



ValleyOrtho



YOUR SURGICAL WRIST FRACTURE PLAYBOOK

Thank you for joining our team at ValleyOrtho.

We feel you are the most valuable person in the surgery and recovery process. This Playbook is your guide to best prepare for and recover from your wrist fracture.

Each member of your care team plays a valuable role and has been trained to assist you every step of the way.

| | |
|--|---|
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Meet Your Physician, Dr. Michael Potter, MD

Dr. Potter is a board-certified, fellowship-trained orthopedic hand surgeon, and provides specialty care of all conditions of the hand and upper extremity, including trauma and problems of the wrist and elbow.

Dr. Potter has practiced hand and upper extremity surgery since 2015, initially in Charlottesville, VA and now at Valley View Hospital since 2020. He has a strong education that has included fellowship training in hand and wrist surgery at Stanford University, an orthopedic surgery residency at the University of Utah, Duke University Medical School graduate with honors, and a bachelor's degree in molecular biology from Princeton University, where he also graduated cum laude.

Dr. Potter is eager to address his patients concerns and make the best treatment decisions with each individual patient.



Meet Your Physician Assistant, Eric Haskell, PA-C

Eric Haskell earned a Master of Science in physician assistant studies at Rocky Vista University, after attending the University of Montana during his undergraduate years.

Originally from Englewood, Eric grew up skiing Colorado's mountains. "I'll never forget the weekends hitting Aspen, Buttermilk, Highlands and Snowmass," he says. "I lived in Steamboat for a while, Estes Park for a while, and they were great, but I'll never forget those weekends coming to the Roaring Fork Valley. I'm grateful to be back permanently and looking forward to building relationships with my community."

Before dedicating himself fully to medicine, Eric worked as a backcountry guide in Colorado, Alaska, Wyoming, Idaho, and New Mexico, specializing in mountain environments. "Mountain guiding shares a lot in common with medicine," he says. "Problem solving, achieving difficult goals, adapting to new situations—challenges arise, you figure them out and work to help your clients. Both on the mountain and in the clinic, this is the process."

Outside of work, Eric enjoys camping, skiing and climbing Colorado's razor-thin ridgelines, like Ypsilon Mountain out in Rocky Mountain National Park. He also enjoys perfecting his backcountry cuisine. His specialty is homemade, campfire pizza.



Meet Your Medical Assistant, Martha Covarrubio, MA

Martha has been working as a Medical Assistant since 2008. She began her career in Bakersfield California in OB and pain management. She started working for ValleyOrtho in 2014 joining Dr. Potter in his hand surgery practice. She has always enjoyed working closely with patients to help get them the answers they need to best care for themselves. Martha enjoys any and all lake activities, especially paddle boarding, and loves to hike around the area.



Meet Your Primary Athletic Trainer Stephen Hughes, ATC

Steve has been with ValleyOrtho since our doors opened in 2013. He has a wealth of experience that he has cultivated since earning his Athletic Trainer Certification in 1986. After his certification, he spent 4 years in the military as an orthopedic technician in both Germany and Fort Knox, KY. He then worked as a high school Athletic Trainer in Springfield, MA before moving to the Front Range to work at a Physical and Occupational Therapy office north of Denver.



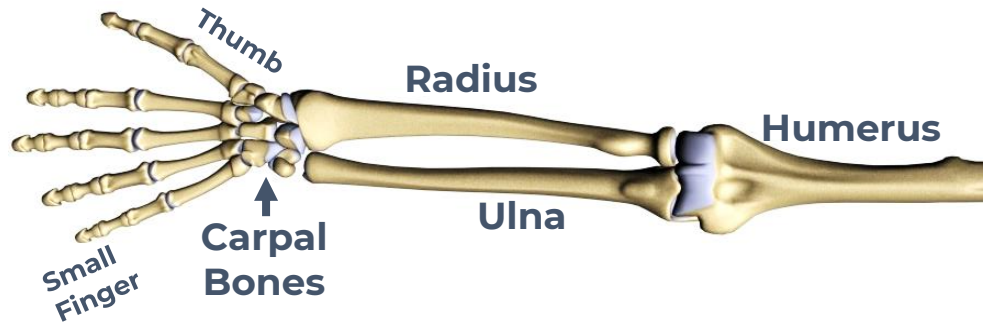
Steve brought his extensive experience and training to the Roaring fork valley in 2005. He is a mentor to his colleagues in casting and splinting techniques as well as in the outdoor adventure sport world. Steve is passionate about this valley and the skiing, biking, and hiking that it provides. Because of his love for these sports, Steve is unfortunately all too familiar with what it is like to be an orthopedic patient himself which helps with his patient care. Steve plays an integral role in making sure our patients at ValleyOrtho are able to get back to the activities they love as well



ANATOMY & SURGERY

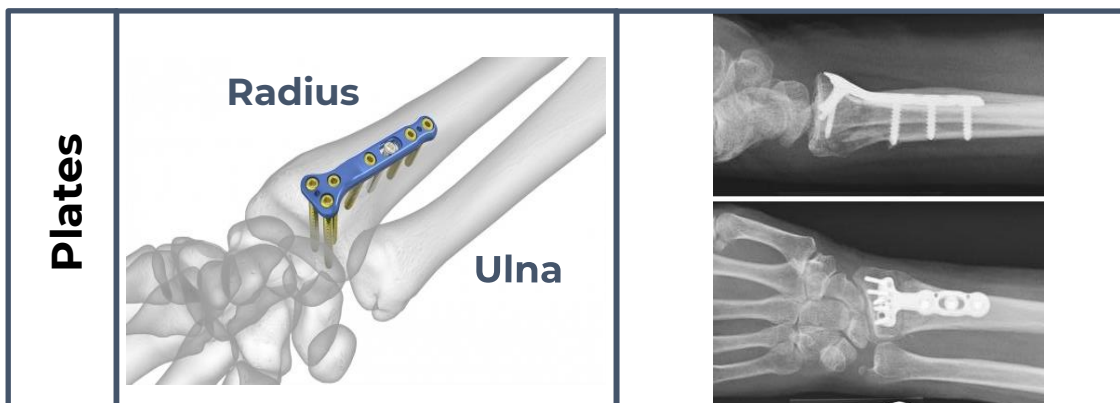
What is the Wrist Exactly?

The wrist is where the radius, ulna and carpal bones come together. The end of the radius, nearest the hand, is one of the most frequently fractured bones in the human body.



Reparative Options:

Dr. Potter prefers to use plating techniques for your surgical repair. Below is an example of that technique:



This involves placing a plate with screws to hold the bones in a proper position while they heal.



A temporary splint or cast will be used to protect the repair until you are fitted with a custom splint by your hand therapist.

WRIST FRACTURE TIMELINE

ONE WEEK PRIOR TO SURGERY

- You will be contacted by the Pre-Anesthesia Clinic to schedule any other medical clearance needed before surgery.
- Schedule your first hand therapy appointment within 3-5 days after your surgery date, refer to page 7 for details.
- Register yourself with our surgery department at OneMedicalPassport.com
- Get set up for your surgery. Refer to page 9-10 to properly plan and prepare.

THE DAY BEFORE SURGERY

- The Day Surgery Department will call after 2pm the day before surgery about:
 - o What time you should plan to arrive at the hospital.
 - o When to stop eating and drinking before surgery.
 - o Which medications to take the morning of surgery.
 - Complete your “Surgery Instructions Worksheet” on page 10.
 - Call 970-384-7166 if you do not hear from the nursing staff by 5pm.

THE NIGHT BEFORE SURGERY

- Shower as you normally would.
- Enjoy dinner then brush your teeth and rinse out your mouth before bedtime.
- **DO NOT** eat or drink anything after midnight unless otherwise instructed
- **DO NOT** smoke. **DO NOT** resume smoking until the day after surgery.
- Put clean sheets on your bed, wear a clean set of pajamas.
- **DO NOT** allow your animals to be in your bed with you.

THE MORNING OF SURGERY

- A shower is only required if you did not do so the night before.
- **DO NOT** use any lotions after your shower.

THE DAY OF SURGERY

- Arrive and register at the hospital at your assigned time.
- Once you are set up in Day Surgery, Dr. Potter will meet you. See page 12.
- You will be placed in a temporary splint or cast after the surgery.

THE DAY AFTER SURGERY

- Take your pain medications as needed.
- **IMPORTANT:** You must control your swelling with frequent finger movement and positioning in combination with your pain medication schedule on page 13.

3-5 DAYS AFTER SURGERY

- You will begin outpatient hand therapy to work on finger motion and swelling management. A custom splint will be made and fit for you at this appointment.



DR. POTTER FOLLOW-UP APPOINTMENTS

Dr. Potter will determine the most appropriate office visit schedule based on your specific fracture and repair. The following is an overview of the most likely schedule.

2 WEEKS AFTER SURGERY

- You will return to Dr. Potter's office to check the healing progress of your wrist with an X-ray and have your stitches removed.
- Based on your healing, you may be advanced to more motion work with your hand therapist.

6 WEEKS AFTER SURGERY

- You will have another X-Ray taken at this visit. Based on the X-ray results from this appointment Dr. Potter may clear you to more strengthening progressions in your rehabilitation process.

FRACTURE RECOVERY & EXPECTATIONS

Recovery phases are dependent on your fracture type, your type of fixation and your individual healing response. The following recovery phases are a generalization of what to expect but they will be adjusted to fit your individual presentation.

PHASE 1: Wrist Protection, Healing, & Early Motion (≈weeks 1 to 6)

- Your surgical wrist is likely to be uncomfortable during the first 3 weeks. This is normal and expected. Refer to pages 13 and 14 for healthy healing strategies.
- You will be immobilized in a wrist splint and working on controlled exercises and activities with your hand therapist to decrease swelling and maintain motion of the uninjured joints.
- It is expected that the swelling and pain levels will improve steadily as you heal.
- You will begin wrist motion with your hand therapist in the middle of this phase as your healing allows.
- We expect you to have good finger and hand mobility by the end of this phase.
- Even though discomfort may still be present, we expect you to stop any narcotic pain medication use within 2 weeks.

PHASE 2: Wrist Mobility and Early Function (≈weeks 6 to 10)

- You will have limited but increasing use of your injured wrist/hand for activities.
- Under direction of Dr. Potter and your hand therapist you will wean from your brace/splint and be directed to appropriate strengthening activities.

PHASE 3: Strengthening & Final Home Program (≈weeks 10+)

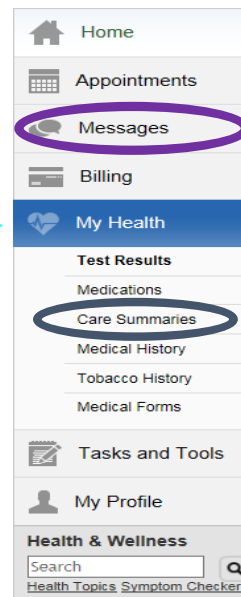
- You will increase your strengthening program to return to normal hand/wrist activity as you progress through this phase. You may have increased muscle soreness from exercise that does not require pain medication as you work to improve the strength and motion of your surgical wrist and hand.

YOUR PRE-OPERATIVE EDUCATION

At ValleyOrtho, you are the most important player on our team. Our pre-operative training program is designed to help you participate in your healing like a pro.

1. Set Up Your Valley View Patient Portal

We will try to set up your account at your pre-operative visit. If for some reason this is not accomplished a handout will be provided with detailed instructions to create your account by clicking a link that we email to you.



Benefits of the Portal

- Easily contact Dr. Potter and his team using the **messaging center**. More details are available on page 8.
- Have access to your visit reports by clicking **“My Health”** on the left sided toolbar then click **“Care Summaries”**.

2. Schedule Your Hand Therapy Appointments

- Schedule your first hand therapy appointment for 3-5 days after your surgery date at the location of your choice.
- Your hand therapist will evaluate you and determine what type of rehabilitation schedule is most beneficial for your recovery.

3. Pain Education

Pain is an expected and necessary part of the healing process after a wrist fracture repair.

- It is normal to have pain when you wake from surgery.
 - It is also normal to feel an increase in pain 12-24 hours after surgery as the stronger medications used for surgery wear off.
- This early increase in pain does not mean there has been any change to the bone positioning.
 - This is your nervous system becoming more efficient at sensing the healing that is taking place in your wrist.
 - It is normal to have some level of discomfort lasting around 3 weeks after surgery.
- After your bone is set properly your pain levels should decrease steadily as your nervous system becomes less sensitive over time.
 - Participation in therapeutic activity, appropriate rest, medication use and swelling management will help with this process.
 - Dr. Potter and your hand therapist will guide you through the pain relieving strategies that will work best for you. See page 13 for more details.



CONTACT US

You're Trained. Now What?

Any surgery can be stressful, but you can rest assured knowing that our team will walk you through every step on your big day.

The rest of this Playbook will explain your pre-surgical, surgical and recovery process from start to finish. Use this as a guide to effectively complete the Surgical Wrist Fracture Timeline on pages 5 and 6.

When you have wrist surgery with ValleyOrtho and Valley View Hospital, our team is committed to helping you achieve the best surgical outcome possible so you can return to the lifestyle you love.

At each stage of your journey, before, during and after surgery, we're here to provide information and answer any questions you may have. Feel free to reach us quickly during business hours by messaging "Dr. Potter" through your Valley View Hospital Patient Portal, or by phone at (970)384-7140. If something is urgent, even outside of business hours, an on call provider can answer your questions by calling 970-384-7140.

The screenshot shows a patient portal interface with a sidebar on the left containing navigation options: Home, Appointments, Messages (highlighted), Billing, My Health, Tasks and Tools, My Profile, and Health & Wellness. The main content area is titled "Messages / Compose Message" and includes a yellow warning banner: "Dial 911 in the case of a medical emergency." Below this is a notice: "Messages sent to our office will receive a response within two (2) business days. If this is a time-sensitive or urgent concern, please contact our office directly via our TOLL FREE number at: 1 (844) 221-0510. All messages and communications with our office are confidential." A note states: "Note: Please use this tool for health-related inquiries only. All messages are included in your patient record." A link "Back to My Inbox" is provided. The "Compose New Message" section features three dropdown menus for "Message type", "Provider", and "Location", with a note: "This information will help us route your message to the correct department and respond faster." Below these are input fields for "Subject" and "Message". A legend indicates that an asterisk (*) denotes a required field.

PREPARING FOR YOUR SURGERY

Prepare Your Body

- Reduce or stop all smoking, tobacco, and alcohol use.



Pre-arrange Your Finances to Reduce Stress

Our Patient Financial Services staff is happy to help all of our patients with their billing questions. If you have questions about billing, insurance, financial assistance or charges for healthcare services, please contact Patient Financial Services at (970)384-6890.

Prepare Your Hospital Transportation

Arrange for a family member or friend to drive you home after your surgery. You will be ready to go home approximately 3 hours after your scheduled surgery time. The hospital can help get you in touch with a taxi service if necessary.

Pack for Your Hospital Visit

To stay comfortable during your hospital visit, we suggest you bring:

- Your Surgical Wrist Fracture Playbook.
- A loose-fitting shirt.
- Eye-glasses instead of contacts.
- Driver's license or photo ID, Insurance card/Medicare Card.
- Copy of your Advanced Health Care Directives.
- Cash or credit card to pay for discharge medications.
- A list of your daily medications, vitamins and herbal supplements, including the dosage and frequency, plus a list of medications you stopped taking in preparation for surgery.
 - o Your own medication will be used **only** when the hospital pharmacy does not stock your specific medication and interruption in the use of that medication would compromise your care. Speak with Dr. Potter if you feel your medications may fit these criteria.
- Your cell phone/charger, books, magazines or other portable hobbies.
- **DO NOT** wear or bring any jewelry or any other valuables. This includes removing wedding bands and all piercings.





SURGERY INSTRUCTIONS SHEET

The Day Surgery staff will call you the business day before your surgery with instructions. Complete this worksheet during that phone call.

Patient calls begin at 2pm one business day before the scheduled surgery date. You may contact the day surgery staff at 970-384-7166 if you have not received your instructions before 5pm one business day before your surgery date.

Fill in Your Personal Instructions Below:

Date of Surgery: _____

Surgery Location: _____

Check-in Time: _____

If you are late it may affect your surgery time, or result in rescheduling your surgery.

Surgery Time: _____

Surgery time is determined by the surgery department for patient safety and medical necessity.

Eating Allowed Until: _____

Do not eat any solid food after midnight before your operation unless otherwise instructed.

Approved Clear Liquids Allowed Until: _____

Do not drink anything after the midnight before surgery unless otherwise instructed.

Approved Clear Liquids Include: Water, Sports Drinks, Sodas, and Strictly Black Coffee (**DO NOT add milk/cream/sugar/honey**).

Any Additional Eating and Drinking Instructions: _____

Medication Instructions: _____

Fill in the Medications/Supplements You are to **STOP** Taking Below:

| | |
|--|--|
| | |
| | |
| | |

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. When can I swim or submerge the incision area?

We want the incisions to be fully healed and free from scabs, which takes 2-3 weeks on average. Please clear this activity with your therapist or Dr. Potter before you submerge the incision.

Q. Will I be in pain after surgery?

You will likely be in some form of discomfort after your wrist is set. This is normal. It is your body telling you to slow down to allow for proper healing. Our team will help you to work through this process, taking your comfort into consideration in everything that we do.

Q. Why does the little finger side of my wrist hurt?

There may be an adjustment period to the position of your healing radius. It is not uncommon to have this discomfort last up to 6 months after your surgery date and then go away. If it lasts longer than 6 months you may benefit from another form of treatment that we can provide at that time. Occasionally numbness can also be felt on the little finger side. This may be caused by the splint and elbow positioning required to stabilize your wrist properly. Please call us if you have concerns.

Q. When will I be able to get back to work?

We recommend that you take at least 3 days off from desk work. If your job is labor intensive, you may need to plan to take closer to 12 weeks off before returning to full duty. Your employer may have light duty options available that would allow you to return sooner. Dr. Potter will assess your individual injury and job duties to properly advise your safe return to work.

Q. How long will my recovery take?

Each fracture recovery can vary but in general the motion of your fingers should be restored within 2-3 weeks and the motion of your wrist and forearm should be restored within 6-8 weeks. The strength and function of your wrist and hand should dramatically improve after 4 months in most cases. Unfortunately it is not uncommon in some cases to require 1-2 years to achieve a full return to your normal level of strength for activity tolerance after a wrist fracture.

Q. How long will I be working with a therapist?

It is beneficial to work with a certified hand therapist throughout your recovery process, which typically lasts 3 months. They will help guide your postsurgical recovery and then progress you to exercises that you will perform to regain motion and strength in your repaired wrist when appropriate.



YOUR SURGERY & FACILITY CARE

The Day of Surgery Game Plan: Checking In

At the Hospital

The Valley View Valet is a free service. The Calaway-Young Cancer Center valet is open from 7:30AM to 5PM.

Stop at the hospital's registration desks by the Emergency Department 2 hours before your surgery time.

- Registration at the Emergency Department entrance is always open.

Valley View

Surgery Center at Basalt

Please use the onsite parking right outside the Mid Valley Surgical Center.

You will register at the front desk on the 2nd floor 2 hours before your surgery time.

Address:

1450 E Valley Rd Suite 202, Basalt, CO 81621

- Our nursing staff will begin preparing you for surgery by starting an IV and ensuring that you're comfortable.
- Dr. Potter will come and answer any additional questions you may have and mark the wrist you are having repaired with a surgical marker.
- An anesthesiologist will meet with you to talk about general anesthesia and the nerve block you will receive for comfort.
- A nurse will take you into the operating room on a portable bed.
- Following surgery you will spend about an hour in the post anesthesia care unit (PACU) while your vitals normalize and your pain is controlled. Your family and friends will not be allowed to visit the PACU.
- You will return to the Day Surgery Department to rest and meet your family and friends.

Your Recovery in the Day Surgery Department

The duration of your hospital stay will be based on your vitals, progress, and safety. Most patients are discharged approximately 2 hours after their surgery.

- You will interact primarily with your day surgery nurse and patient care technician (PCT).
- A nurse will assist you while getting in and out of bed and into the bathroom. Do not try to get out of bed by yourself. They will help guide your movements, monitor pain and dizziness, and keep you safe from falls.
- An IV will continue to deliver fluids into your system until you are eating and drinking well. Your nurse will help progress your diet after surgery. Your nurse will issue your prescriptions just prior to your check out.

AT HOME AFTER YOUR SURGERY

Monitor Your Healing

Healing after a wrist fracture procedure can be uncomfortable but you need to know what signs of healing need immediate professional attention. An on call provider is ready to help you at all times. **Immediately call 970-384-7140 if you experience any of the following:**



- A fever of over 101.5 degrees.
- An increase in bleeding from the surgical site.
- Worsening pain that is not controlled by medication or position changes.
- Worsening nausea or vomiting.
- Increased swelling that is not controlled by elevation or consistent finger movements.
- Increased redness around your incisions and/or cloudy fluid draining from the incision.
- Or if you get the feeling that something is just not right.
- **Call 911 with** Shortness of breath and/or chest pain symptoms.

Your Postoperative Pain Management Schedule

Keep in mind that the goal of taking pain medication is not to be pain free after a major orthopedic surgery, but to be comfortable enough to get some sleep and participate in your therapy program.

| Level 1: Begin with Acetaminophen | | | Level 2: If Pain is Not Managed Add a Nonsteroidal Anti-Inflammatory | | | Level 3: If Pain is Still Not Managed Add Narcotic |
|-----------------------------------|-------|------------------|---|-------|--|---|
| Extra Strength | 500mg | 2 tablets 3x/day | Ibuprofen | 200mg | 3 tablets between each acetaminophen dose | Add one tablet of your prescribed narcotic pain medication if you experience breakthrough pain that is not managed by the level 1 or level 2 strategies. Then try to resume your non-narcotic schedule as soon as you feel able. |
| *OR* | | | *OR* | | | |
| Regular Strength | 325mg | 3 tablets 3x/day | Naproxen | 220mg | 2 tablets between every other acetaminophen dose | |
| | | | *If you have stomach or heart problems please speak with Dr. Potter before you begin this medication* | | | |

Swelling Management: Help decrease discomfort from swelling pressure.

- Elevation:
 - o Support your injured wrist at or above the level of your heart.
- Finger Motion: 3 sets of 10. Repeat 4x/day.
 - o Gently curl your fingers as shown without moving the injured wrist.





YOUR RECOVERY PROCESS

Steps to Get Back in the Game

The ultimate goal is to get you back to your work, functional activities and hobbies. The surgery is only a part of your journey. The key to returning to your pre-injury activities is to work hard to regain motion and strength in your repaired wrist under the direction of Dr. Potter and your hand therapist. We are here to guide your recovery towards the best possible outcome.

Follow These Precautions For 6 Weeks or Until Otherwise Directed by Your Care Team:

Protecting your healing repair in the early phase is critical for your long term success.

- **DO NOT** lift, push, or pull any objects with your surgical arm.
- **DO NOT** lean on your surgical arm when pushing up from sitting or lying.

Let Our Pros Help You Tackle New Challenges

Your hand therapist will help problem solve and address any challenges you may experience at home. Below are some tips to make life a little easier to start.

- **Dressing:** Non-tie shoes and elastic-waist pants are the best options for ease.
- **Toileting:** You can only use your uninjured arm for cleaning yourself after using the toilet.
- **Household chores:** Participation with your injured wrist during light household activities should be limited in the first 6-8 weeks. Speak with Dr. Potter or your hand therapist if you have activity requirements you are concerned about.
- **Transportation:** Plan for someone to drive you to your appointments. You must not drive while taking your narcotics. During the first 6 weeks you are considered an impaired driver even if you are off of the narcotics because you only have one arm available to drive when you are used to having two available.
- **Showering:** Shower as soon as you want after returning home. Use a cast cover to prevent the splint from getting wet.
- **Pain:** You will likely have some discomfort following your wrist fracture. Over the counter pain medication should be your primarily source of pain control. Prescription strength medication should only be added to control breakthrough pain as necessary. See page 13 for a detailed pain management schedule.

