

# Some options exist for bracing after a fall



**BY H. MATTHEW QUITKIN, MD**

It starts as a day like any other. Suddenly, you catch a toe on the curb, slip on wet grass, or discover that patch of ice lurking beneath the snow and you're airborne with your arms instinctively extended to try to catch yourself.

A hard landing on your hands is accompanied by sharp pain in the wrist and you know something is seriously wrong as your wrist quickly swells and becomes black and blue. You have sustained a distal radius fracture, the most common form of a broken wrist.

Distal radius fractures are among the most common orthopedic injuries, affecting people at all stages of life. Thirty-five percent to 40 percent of all childhood fractures affect the wrist, and wrist fractures remain the most commonly seen fracture in adults under the age of 65. While there are 206 bones in the body, 1 of every 6 fractures seen in emergency

rooms affects the wrist. Wrist fractures can have a significant impact on the school-age and working populations, but a recent study in the *British Medical Journal* (July 2010) also demonstrated just how devastating these injuries are in the senior population as well.

In this study of 6,107 women over age 65, 268 suffered wrist fractures in the course of the 7-year study. With other factors being equal, the women who suffered wrist fractures were 48 percent more likely to suffer a clinically important functional decline, meaning that it compromised their ability to prepare meals, do heavy housework, climb 10 stairs, shop, or even get out of a car.

In assessing distal radius fractures we are concerned about a number of parameters. The first important question surrounds the integrity of the skin and soft tissue around the fractured bone. A fracture associated with a wound, a so-called open or compound fracture, is a surgical emergency and must be treated operatively within 12 hours of

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occurrence to minimize the risk of infection. Closed fractures, those in which the skin remains intact, are further categorized as intra-articular, affecting the joint surface itself, or extra-articular, lying entirely outside the joint.

The treatment of a distal radius fracture is tailored to the patient and the fracture type. Most closed distal radius fractures in children can be treated with closed reduction, or "setting," as necessary and cast immobilization. Some unstable fractures in the pediatric population do require internal stabilization.

Treatment options in adults include closed reduction and casting, wire fixation in conjunction with casting, external fixation and rigid inter-

nal fixation with a plate and screws. Until the last decade, most distal radius fractures in adults were treated with either closed reduction and casting or external fixation. With both of these methods, the wrist is immobilized for six to eight weeks. This period of immobility creates significant stiffness in the wrist, and often in the fingers as well. Patients with displaced fractures treated with these methods frequently required months of hand therapy to regain even less than normal motion. Suboptimal function of the wrist and hand was the result.

About 10 years ago, a Miami hand surgeon, and his colleagues developed a new plate designed to rigidly sta-

bilize distal radius fractures while minimizing joint immobility. Whereas the wrist was immobilized for six to eight weeks with the other methods of treatment, fractures stabilized with a volar plate can now be mobilized starting at two weeks. This has made a tremendous difference in how quickly and how fully patients regain motion at the wrist and fingers and has minimized the impact of distal radius fractures on long-term function. Our goal is not just to get the fracture to heal but to get people back to normal.

Once the fracture has been secured, rehabilitation can begin. A skilled hand therapist joins the patient and the surgeon as the third critical member of the wrist fracture recovery team. The initiation of therapy early in the healing process allows patients to take full advantage of the benefits this cutting edge technology offers. Starting with simple motion exercises two weeks following surgery, the wrist is mobilized and strengthened through a gradual, progressive pro-

gram. The time to maximal recovery is generally half of that seen with earlier surgical methods, and the ultimate functional recovery is much closer to normal.

If you have injured your wrist, early evaluation by an orthopaedic hand surgeon will help you choose optimal treatment. Getting the best care available can make the difference between "better" and normal.

*Dr. Rod Bruno and Dr. Matt Quitkin direct the Hand Center at Access Sports Medicine & Orthopaedics, providing the most innovative and comprehensive care for patients suffering from diseases and conditions of the hand and upper extremity in Northern New England. Both are board-certified in orthopaedic hand surgery and have more than 20 years of experience. They work in conjunction with certified hand and occupational therapists to restore function and improve the quality of life for their patients. Same day appointments are available, call 775-7575 or visit [www.accesssportsmed.com](http://www.accesssportsmed.com).*

## CALENDAR

### MONDAY, OCT. 18

#### Portsmouth

**TWO NIGHT CAREER PLANNING WORKSHOP:** titled "Finding the Work You Love" will be held from 7 to 8:30 p.m. Monday, Oct. 18 and 25 at the Portsmouth Middle School, Parrott Avenue, Portsmouth. The workshop, presented by local Career Counselor Andrea St. Jean, MS, CCC, will guide participants through the five steps to choosing a rewarding and satisfying career – and how to develop a career map to get there. The cost is \$25. Participants can sign up for the workshop by contacting Portsmouth Community Education at 431-5080, ext. 444. To learn more about the content of the workshop, contact the presenter, Andrea St. Jean at 502-2322 or [www.andreastj.com](http://www.andreastj.com).

**WATER YOGA AND PILATES:** Mondays, 8:45-9:45 a.m. This program creatively adapts yoga and pilates exercises for the pool. You will enhance flexibility, strength, breathing and body awareness while connecting the mind and body. Information: Call Valerie at 436-6655 or Portsmouth Indoor Pool at 427-1546.

**AQUA-FITNESS 1:** Mondays, 10-11 a.m. The perfect combination of gentle aerobic exercises, muscle toning, strengthening, and stretching makes this a great aquatic fitness class. We welcome non-swimmers plus those new to water fitness. Information: Call Valerie at 436-6655 or Portsmouth Indoor Pool at 427-1546.

**A FREE BUDDHIST PSYCHOLOGY CLASS:** will be held from 7 to 9 p.m. Monday, Oct. 18 and 25 at the Seacoast Wellness Center, 135 McDonough St., Portsmouth. Information: 531-3130, [avim@acupuncturemedial.org](mailto:avim@acupuncturemedial.org).

#### Eliot, Maine

**"DEEP CINEMA:"** with Mary Trainor-Brigham, a therapist, workshop facilitator, film critic, and author at 6:30 p.m. Monday, Oct. 18 at the William Fogg Public Library, Eliot, Maine. She will show how movies can help us understand our progress through life's chapters. Movies discussed will include "Whale Rider," "The Last Wave," "It's Complicated," "The Perfect Storm," and many others.

### TUESDAY, OCT. 19

#### Portsmouth

**DIABETIC SHOE CLINIC:** Are you a diabetic on Medicare? If so, you are entitled to one pair of therapeutic shoes, plus inserts each calendar year, paid for by Medicare. Come and pick a shoe style and get measured for shoes at a clinic Tuesday, Oct 19 at Wentworth Connections, 127 Parrott Ave., Portsmouth. Call for appoint-



COURTESY PHOTO

## Open mic night

Portsmouth Christian Academy at Dover hosted WTSN-AM 1270's "Open Mic" live broadcast recently. Pat Kelly, WTSN's education reporter interviewed a panel of PCA Upper School students about important issues. Among the topics covered were opinions about President Barack Obama's extended school year plan, community service and mission work, as well as their perspective regarding the media coverage of the rescue of Chile's trapped miners. Sylvan Learning sponsored this special education forum. Pat Kelly is shown seated; standing (left to right) is Andrew Cunningham, Zach Silk, Brian Imke, Ali Mason, Rachel Cole and Brandie Rice.

ment at 828-6762. All widths available. Bring your Medicare and insurance information plus your doctor's name, address, and phone number.

**WRITERS' OPEN FORUM:** Calling all authors! Join us at the Portsmouth Public Library from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 19 for an opportunity to share your "works-in-progress" with friends. Bring a submission of no more than five (5) pages, double spaced, for critique. Authors will read to a small break-out group of peers and receive oral feedback within their group. All genres and experience levels welcome. Contact Terri Bruce at [fancycaatz@careerations.com](mailto:fancycaatz@careerations.com).

**AQUA-FITNESS 2:** Tuesdays and Thursdays, 8:45-9:45 a.m. This is a highly effective shallow and deep water workout. This program also includes Pilates and yoga exercises. Information: Call Valerie at 436-6655 or Portsmouth Indoor Pool at 427-1546.

**EVENING AQUA-FITNESS:** Tuesdays, 6:15-7 p.m. Burn calories! Boost your metabolism! The total body toning and stretching exercises make this a complete and effective workout. Information: Call Valerie at 436-6655 or Portsmouth Indoor Pool at 427-1546.

#### Durham

**UNH SYMPHONY OR-**

**CHESTRA, DAVID UPHAM, CONDUCTING:** at 8 p.m.

Tuesday, Oct. 19 at the Johnson Theatre, Paul Creative Arts Center, Durham. Free and open to the public. For more information, call the UNH Music Department at 862-2404, or visit [www.unh.edu/music](http://www.unh.edu/music).

#### Rye

**FREE EXCEL TRAINING WORKSHOP:** Tuesday, Oct. 19 in Rye. Learn how to manage lists of information in Microsoft Excel. Sort data, prepare mailing lists, filter data using multiple criteria, apply subtotals and find duplicates. Microsoft Office Master Instructor, Del Record, will deliver this FREE workshop. Space is limited and pre-registration is required. 944-0569, <http://www.delinstitute.com>.

#### Greenland

**FRIENDS' SPAGHETTI DINNER:** will be held from 5 to 8:30 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 19 at the Greenland Vet's Hall, across from Suds N Soda in Greenland. Join the Friends and Trustees of the Weeks Public Library for a midweek dinner to support a good cause. All proceeds to benefit Friends' programming. The Vet's Hall is located at 376 Portsmouth Ave. on the corner of Route 33 in Greenland. For more information contact the Weeks Public Library at 436-8548 or e-mail at [weekspl@comcast.net](mailto:weekspl@comcast.net).

**Kittery, Maine**

**ROBERT'S MAINE GRILL, IN KITTERY, MAINE:** will host a "Community Supper" on two nights — Tuesday, Oct. 19 and 26 to help support Tidewater Waldorf School. Every Tuesday night Robert's Maine Grill, Route 1, in Kittery offers a "Community Supper" starting at 5 p.m. The main focus of the supper is a \$12, 3-course menu – a mid-week "recession buster" offering. The menus are in the spirit of Robert's style: Maine Comfort Food with an updated twist. Robert's regular dinner menu is also available. To add to the community spirit of it, each Tuesday Robert's donates a portion of proceeds from the evening to a local non-profit. Upcoming Community Supper menus are posted at [www.robertsmainegrill.com](http://www.robertsmainegrill.com). Reservations are recommended. (207) 439-0300.

### WEDNESDAY, OCT. 20

#### Portsmouth

**RESTORATIVE YOGA:** Relax and renew with restorative yoga. The fall series is held Wednesdays, Oct. 20, 27, Nov. 3, 10 and 17, at Yoga East Yoga, Deer Street, Portsmouth. Cost is \$65 for

## HALLOWEEN EVENTS

### TRICK OR TREAT

#### SATURDAY, OCT. 30

- BRENTWOOD: 5 to 7 p.m.
- EAST KINGSTON: 5 to 7 p.m.
- ELIOT, MAINE: no set times
- EXETER: 4 to 7 p.m.
- HAMPTON FALLS: 5 to 7 p.m.
- KENSINGTON: 5 to 7 p.m.
- KITTERY, MAINE: no set times
- NEW CASTLE: 5:30 to 8 p.m.
- NEWFIELDS: 5 to 7 p.m.
- NEWINGTON: 5 to 7:30 p.m.
- NEWMARKET: 5 to 8 p.m.
- NORTH HAMPTON: 4 to 7 p.m.
- PORTSMOUTH: 5 to 7:30 p.m.
- RYE: 5 to 7 p.m.
- SEABROOK: 5 to 8 p.m.
- STRATHAM: 5 to 7 p.m.
- YORK, MAINE: 5 to 8 p.m.

### SUNDAY, OCT. 31

- EPPING: 5 to 7 p.m.
- GREENLAND: 5 to 7 p.m.
- HAMPTON: 5:30 to 8 p.m.

### OCT. 20 AND 21

#### Hampton

**"TWILIGHT OF TERROR":** a spooky send-up of Halloween movies, will be presented by the Hampton Recreation at Old Salt Restaurant, Goody Cole Room,

five-week registration or \$15 per class. Pre-registration is required. Call Valerie at 436-6655 or e-mail [valeriefagin@comcast.net](mailto:valeriefagin@comcast.net). Bring a towel, water, yoga mat and eye pillow (if you have one). This practice is appropriate for all levels, beginner through advanced.

**GARDEN IN THE WOODS BOTANIC AND HORTICULTURE DIRECTOR SCOTT LAFLEUR, WILL SPEAK TO THE PORTSMOUTH GARDEN CLUB:** at 1:30 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 20 at the Urban Forestry Center, 45 Elwyn Road, Portsmouth. The title of his presentation "Listening to the Seacoast Landscape." Guests are welcome to attend with advance notice. Contact Nancy at 433-4384 or visit [www.Portsmouthnhgarden-club.com](http://www.Portsmouthnhgarden-club.com) for more information.

Lafayette Road, Hampton on Wednesday, Oct. 20 and Thursday, Oct. 21 at 6 p.m. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. Tickets for the event, which features more than 24 children, are \$29.99 for adults and \$14.99 for children. The ticket price includes a gourmet three-course meal. Seating is limited and all seats must be reserved. For reservations, call The Old Salt at 926-0330. "Twilight of Terror," written and directed by George Hosker-Bouley, is the fourth performance combining the youth talent of Hampton with the culinary skills of The Old Salt Restaurant. An outgrowth of Hosker-Bouley's improvisational theater classes, which also produces performances for the Sratham Fair and Prescott Park, the show is a tongue-in-cheek look at the things that go bump in the night. The entire show, which is presented between courses, is performed by 24 students ages 7-13 along with perennial favorites Marian Marangelli and Kathy Horrigan.

### SATURDAY, OCT. 23

#### Epping

**AMERICAN LEGION POST 51:** Halloween Dance with Stumpy & The Goats Band, Classic Rock & Blues, 8 pm - Midnight, \$6, Rte 125, Epping. 679-8320

### OCT. 29

#### Portsmouth

**THE 16TH ANNUAL HALLOWEEN:** Costume Monster Mash Family Dance is Friday, Oct. 29, from 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Connie Bean Recreation Center. See [www.cityofportsmouth.com/recreation/programs-5.htm](http://www.cityofportsmouth.com/recreation/programs-5.htm) for more info.

### THURSDAY, OCT. 21

#### Portsmouth

**LARRY SIMON/JAZZMOUTH PRESENTS:** Beat Night, an evening of Poetry & Spoken Word accompanied by Live Music at 7 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 21 at The Press Room, 77 Daniel St. Portsmouth. Admission is free, but there is a suggested \$2 donation. Information: 431-5186. Readers: Kate Leigh, Mike Nelson, Dennis Camire, Michael Pallecchia. With Live Music by The Larry Simon Ensemble: Larry Simon-Guitar, Scip Gallant-Keys, Chris Stambaugh-Bass, Cynthia Chatis-Flute, Mike Barron, & Frank Laurino-Drum. Followed by the open mic at 8 p.m.