

Medical Steps

If you're already feeling pain in your wrists, it's important to seek medical help soon, before you do any more damage. Here are the major steps in the medical process that can lead to relief for your problems.

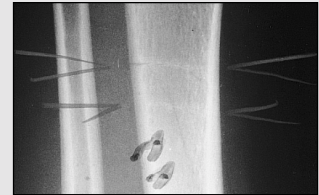
Diagnosis: This is made by the physician after he takes a history, physical findings, laboratory, and findings by a radiologist.

Laboratory findings: These center around the synovial fluid (which lubricates the joints). A physician uses a thin needle to withdraw fluid, which is analyzed.

Radiology: X-rays and other methods can be used to show a picture of the area in question. The chief of radiology at Tyrone Hospital, Dr. Bernard DiGiacobbe, says osteoarthritis sufferers (who often get the disease as the result of prolonged joint trauma) will generally have narrowing of the joint spaces, which is due to cartilage being lost. Also, subchondral sclerosis, wherein bone density is increased in damaged areas, is often seen. The development of bony spurs near joints is another common problem.

DiGiacobbe says stress fractures are one of the first problems he looks for, and he can make his earliest diagnosis using nuclear medicine scanning. These fractures are often seen as a hairlike lucency traversing the bone.

Treatment: There are many avenues of treatment, but the most conservative and least expensive is rest. If a shooter continues an activity which got him into trouble in the first place, a form of chronic fracture may occur. If a shooter notices such problems, which usually begin with pain, rest is needed and handgun shooting should cease for a period determined by your physician. This rest period should then be strictly adhered to. You do not want any problems you have to become chronic.



Above: This X-ray shows two stress fractures (the two light lines in the bone). Other recoil-related problems can include carpal tunnel syndrome, arthritis, inflammation, and other repetitive stress injuries. Courtesy of Bernard DiGiacobbe, M.D.