

A SIMPLE AND CLEANLY METHOD FOR IMMOBILIZING THE WRIST

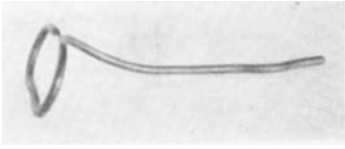
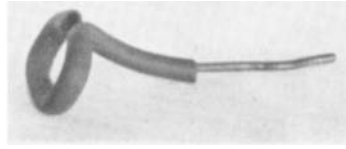
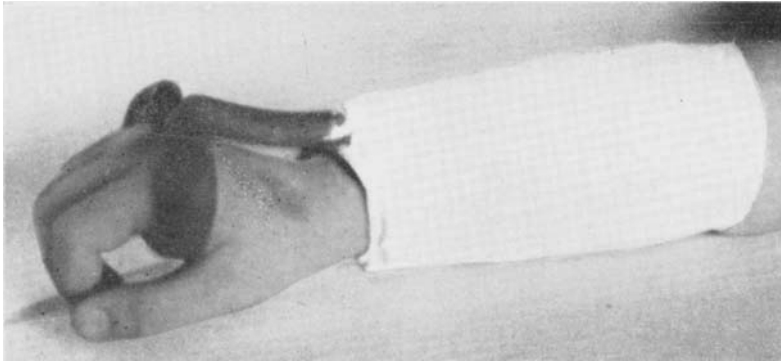
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An ordinary plaster-of-Paris cast is quite suitable for prolonged immobilization of the wrist, provided the patient is not allowed to work with his hand. With most injuries requiring such immobilization, however, it is usually necessary to allow for some movements of the hand, for ordinary work. The distal end of the plaster is therefore very liable to be damaged, softened and soiled, and if it has to support the palm for a considerable time, it needs to be so thick that flexion of the fingers is difficult. Further, abscesses and sinuses of the hand or wrist may require openings or "windows" in the plaster which not only weaken it, but also make it difficult to keep either the plaster or the skin round the wound clean and the risk of secondary infection is increased.

In such cases a plaster-of-Paris cast may be replaced by special removable splints, which are expensive.

A simple and cheap splint, which serves the same purpose, is shown in figs. 1-3. The materials needed are a stiff iron rod 5-6 mm in circumference, a rubber tube, a plaster-of-Paris bandage, and a couple of forceps for bending and moulding the rod, which must be as stiff and inelastic as possible in order to prevent the splint from bending or breaking. One end of the rod is bent to form a stirrup a little larger than the transverse section of the hand just distal to the middle of the four ulnar metacarpal bones, and its shape is adapted to that of the hand at this level, with due reference to the

*Fig. 1.**Fig. 2.**Fig. 3.*

palmar curve. The rest of the rod lies over the dorsum of the hand and the lower forearm, and is moulded so that the hand is held in slight dorsi-flexion. Before closing the stirrup the rubber tube is drawn over the iron rod to a point a little above the wrist, just high enough to be included in the plaster bandage. The stirrup is now closed as far as possible and is moulded exactly to the hand so as to immobilise it without exerting too great pressure on it. A thin tongue of plaster-of-Paris is inserted between the skin and the rod above the wrist, and a similar tongue is secured outside it. The plaster-of-Paris is then applied outside the rod so as to hold the wrist, and is moulded carefully round the distal parts of ulna and radius so that it cannot slip down; there are also several indentations on the upper part of the rod to prevent the plaster slipping. With this arrangement it is possible to wash and attend to the whole of the hand distal to the plaster-of-Paris, and sinuses and abscesses can be dressed. The wrist

is immobilized but complete freedom of movement of all the fingers and the first metacarpal is retained. This is a matter of great importance to the function of the hand. As the splint is not so thick over the palm as an ordinary plaster-of-Paris cast, maximum flexion of the four ulnar fingers is also assured. This splint cannot be used if the first metacarpal must also be immobilized.

RESUME

L'auteur parle d'une simple petite éclisse pour remplacer le bandage ordinaire de plâtre du poignet. L'éclisse peut être mise en place par l'opérateur et consiste en un gros fil de fer recouvert d'un épais tuyau de caoutchouc plâtré dans un bandage qui ne va que jusqu'au poignet. La main et le poignet étant dégagés peuvent être lavés et les plaies éventuelles ou les fistules soignées comme d'ordinaire.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Der Verfasser empfiehlt eine einfache, reinliche Handgelenksschiene zum Gebrauch anstatt der üblichen Gipsbandage. Die Schiene kann vom Operateur angefertigt werden und besteht aus einem dicken Stahldraht bekleidet mit einem dicken Gummirohr, das in die Gipsbandage, die nur bis zum Handgelenk reicht, eingepist wird. Die Hand und Handgelenksregion kann auf diese Weise reingehalten werden und eventuelle Fisteln oder Wunden können in der gewöhnlichen Weise behandelt werden.