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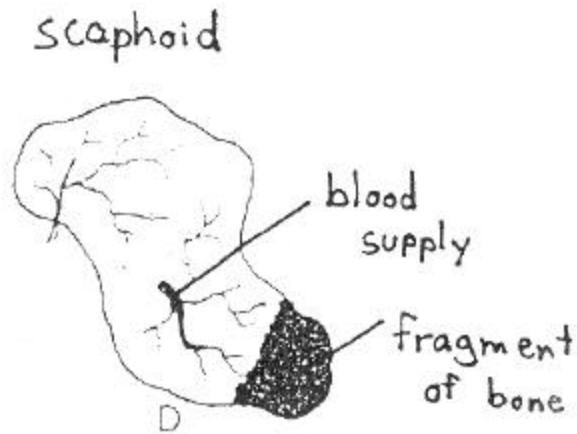
*"treating the cause of your problem, not just the symptoms"*

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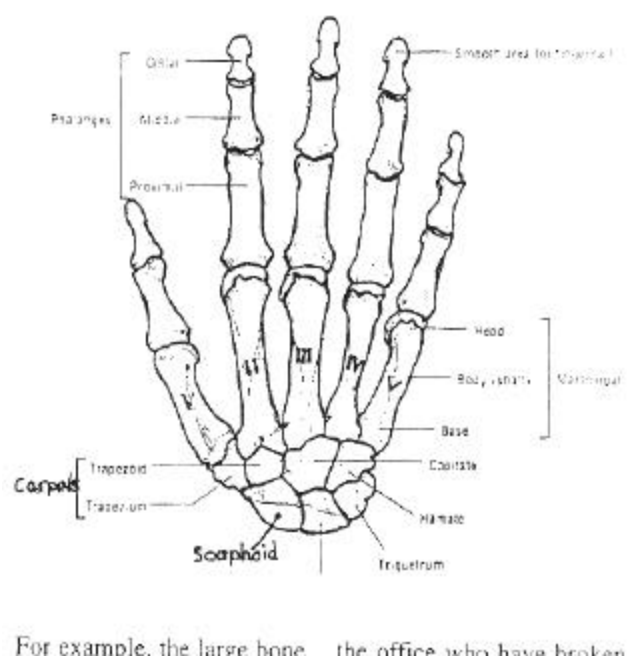
## With the Wrist, a Small Fall Can Cause a Big Problem

The popularity of skate boarding, snow boarding, and roller blading increases every year. As the participation in these sports grows, so do the number of injuries.

One of the more common areas to be injured is the wrist. Our wrist is made up of eight small individual bones, called "carpal" bones (see diagram). They are held together by many very strong but short little ligaments. When participating in the above-mentioned activities, falling forwards or backwards can be a common occurrence. When we fall forward, our first reaction is to put our hands out, generally with our wrist bent backward to catch ourselves. When the wrist hits the ground, it must attempt to handle the entire weight of the upper body. When the force put through the wrist is more than what the bones can handle they can fracture. Unfortunately, one of these carpal bones (the scaphoid) is the most common one to break. This "scaphoid" bone has some unique characteristics that the other carpal bones do not have. Most bones in the body have a blood supply entering them from each end. For example, the large bone in your thigh (femur) has blood supply entering it from the hip and from the knee. So, when you break that bone in half, each end of the bone has its own separate blood supply to keep it alive and healthy. The scaphoid bone is designed differently. Its primary blood supply enters the bone in middle instead of the ends (see diagram). Therefore, if you break off one end of the bone, the fragment will not get an adequate blood supply. The fragment of bone will then die and degenerate, causing severe arthritis in the wrist. I have had numerous patients come to the office who have broken their wrist before and have not had it treated properly. Their wrist does not bend backwards or forwards as far as it should and after while it can be quite painful as the arthritis sets in.



To make matters even more difficult, a crack or break of this bone is very difficult to see on x-ray and can be easily missed by even the most trained Medical Doctor or Chiropractor. With some patients, the swelling is minimal and no real bruising shows up. To be sure there is no fracture, the wrist should be re-x-rayed again 10 days later. After this period of time, a crack is easier to see as it tries to heal. If a fracture has occurred, the wrist has to be immobilized with a cast.



If a fracture has been definitely ruled out and just a bad sprain has occurred, the wrist should still be immobilized for a short period of time. Once the pain and

swelling has decreased, the wrist should receive conservative treatment. This includes mobilization of the eight bones in the wrist by a Chiropractor or Physiotherapist. Stretching and strengthening exercises should also be done for a period of time.

To prevent serious wrist injuries, purchase the wrist guards that are sold with rollarblades. They protect the wrist from impact when falling forwards and prevent the excessive backward bending of the wrist joint. These simple and inexpensive pieces of equipment can prevent many of the wrist fractures from occurring.

For any further questions, feel free to contact me at my office.