

MIKE FOSTER
Hand Wrist and Elbow Surgeon
Scapholunate Reconstruction

Problem

- Pain and discomfort on the back of the wrist

Cause

- The scapholunate ligament has ruptured and failed to heal, leading to pain and instability in the wrist.

Diagnosis

- Dorsal sided wrist pain
- Localising tenderness to the scapholunate area of the wrist
- Feelings of instability with gripping
- Positive Watson Shift Test
- X-rays often show widening of the scapholunate gap, and may show a DISI deformity
- MRI scan usually shows a rupture of the ligament
- Arthroscopy could confirm the diagnosis, if the degree of tearing is minor.

Treatment

- Surgical
- General anaesthetic and arm block
- Dorsal incision to the back of the wrist to expose the carpal bones.
- Debridement of the scapholunate area
- Harvesting of tendon from the volar aspect of the wrist, either FCR, or palmaris longus
- Reconstruction of the ligament using the tendon, either with interosseous tunnels or capsule embrication.
- Temporary 'K' Wires, to maintain fixation while the soft tissues heal

Potential Complications

- Infection, haematoma, neurovascular injury
- Stiffness
- Loss of flexion and extension
- Failure of reconstruction

Post Op Care

- Below elbow cast for eight weeks
- Removal of wires at the eight week mark
- Then hand therapy for strengthening and range of movement