

Strengthening and stretching exercises if you have Rheumatoid Arthritis of the hand: Part 1

Occupational Therapy Department

Name and contact number of therapist:

Date issued:

What is this exercise programme for?

This programme of exercises is for people with rheumatoid arthritis. If you follow this programme, it will help to improve hand strength and function.

You may hear this programme called Strengthening and Stretching for Rheumatoid Arthritis of the Hand, or the SARAH programme.

How often should I do exercises?

Complete these daily.

Do 5 repetitions. Hold each position for 5 seconds.

If this causes no increase in pain or other difficulties, increase this to 10 repetitions (record date here)

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Therapist comments:

Exercise 1: finger bends



Keeping your knuckles straight,
bend the first two joints of your
fingers down as shown.
Hold for _____ seconds.



Return to start position



Then bending your fingers, try to touch
the base of your hand as shown.



Return to start position



Then try to make a fist as shown.

Exercise 2: finger walking



1. Place your hands palm down on a table so they are in line with your forearm.



2. Move your thumb out to the side as shown.



3. Lift up the index finger and move it towards the thumb.



4. Place it down as close to the thumb as possible.



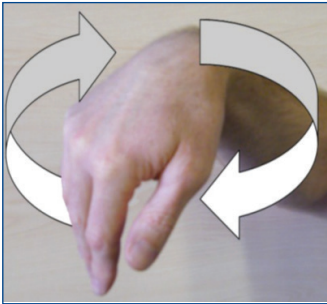
5. Repeat this process with the other fingers. Pick your hands up off the table and return to start position.

Exercise 3: knuckle bends



Bend the Knuckle joints of all your fingers down as shown. Keep the other finger joints straight. You can do both hands at the same time.

Exercise 4: wrist circles



Move your hand in a circle keeping your forearm and elbow still. Repeat in opposite direction. You can do both hands at the same time.

Exercise 5: spreading fingers



1. Place your hands flat on the table. spreading fingers, Spread your fingers apart as much as comfortably possible while keeping the fingers straight.



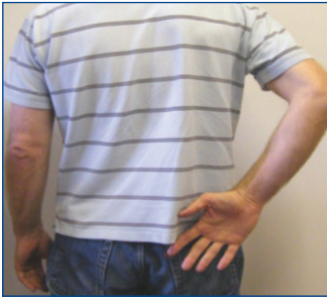
2. Spread your fingers apart as much as comfortably possible while keeping the fingers straight.

Exercise 6: hand behind head



Try to reach your hand behind your head and neck as far as comfortably possible. You can do both arms at the same time.

Exercise 7: hand behind back



Try to reach your hand up behind your back as far as comfortably possible. You can do both arms at the same time.

Who can I contact for further information and advice?

Please do not hesitate to contact your Rheumatology Occupational Therapist on:

Brighton General Hospital
01273 696011 Ext. 4071

Princess Royal Hospital
01444 441881 Ext. 68266

Southlands or Worthing Hospitals
01273 446060

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**This leaflet is intended for patients receiving care
in Brighton and Haywards Health.**

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