

Strengthening exercises if you have osteoarthritis of the hand

Occupational Therapy Department

Patient information

Date Issued:

Therapist comments:

What is this exercise programme for?

This exercise programme is for people who have osteoarthritis of the hand. It is designed to exercise the joints, muscles and tendons of your hands and wrists. If you do these exercises, they will help you to maintain your range of movement, grip and strength.

How often should I do these exercises?

Do these exercises daily.

Start with little and often until you get used to the exercises.

Start with 3 and aim for 10 repeats of each exercise.

Hold for 3 to 5 seconds.

Be aware

You may get some pain while doing the exercise. If your hands are painful for more than half an hour after exercising, you may have done too much. Try soaking your hands in warm water when exercising.

Relax between each exercise by wiggling your fingers.

Do not

✗ do these exercises when the joints are actively inflamed (red, hot, swollen and painful). An inflamed joint needs to be rested. You can, however, gently stretch the joints regularly during a flare up.

Exercises

1. With hand on its side, push the thumb upwards, resisting the movement with the other hand.



2. With hand on its side, push the thumb out away from the hand, resisting the movement with the other hand.



3. Squeeze sponge ball or putty in whole hand.



4. Squeeze sponge or putty between thumb and each fingertip, trying to make an O shape.



5. Putty Finger Span, roll the putty into a sausage and spread between fingers.



6. With hand palm down, push index finger towards thumb, resisting the movement with the other hand.



7. With forearm on chair arm, palm facing down, lift hand up towards ceiling, resisting the movement with the other hand. Repeat pushing down against resistance.



Who can I call for further information and advice?

Contact details

Please do not hesitate to contact your Rheumatology Occupational Therapist.

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
Rheumatology Occupational Therapy patients at Princess Royal,
Brighton General Hospital and Southlands Hospital

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