

# Hand Exercises

## Hand Therapy Patient Information

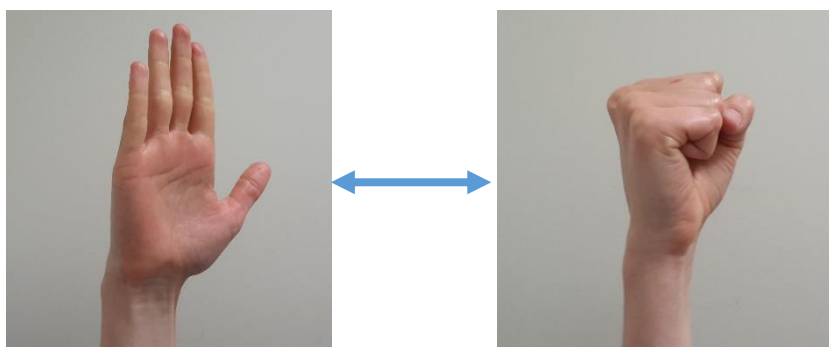
The exercises on the sheet are designed to keep your joints supple, help the structures glide freely and strengthen your hand.

### Range of Movement Exercises

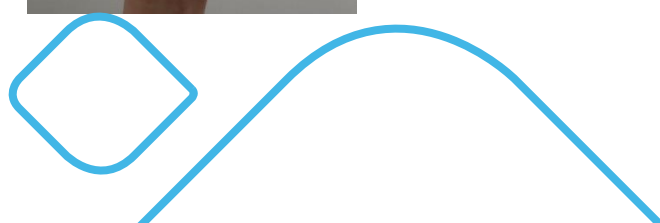
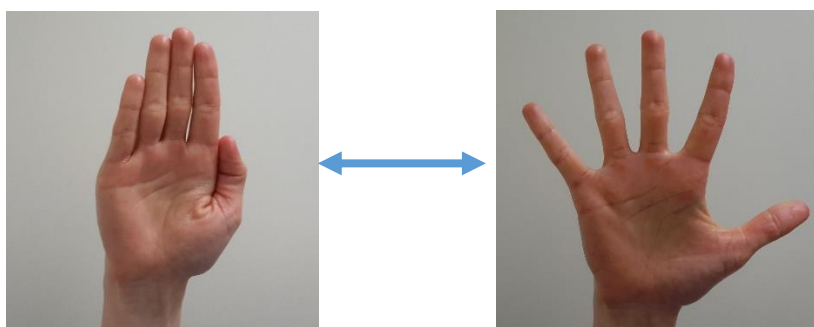
**Aim to complete 10-20 repetitions, every 1-2 hours.**

- These exercises are designed to improve the movement in your hand.
- These exercises should be done gently and without force, but take your hand through as full a range of movement as possible.

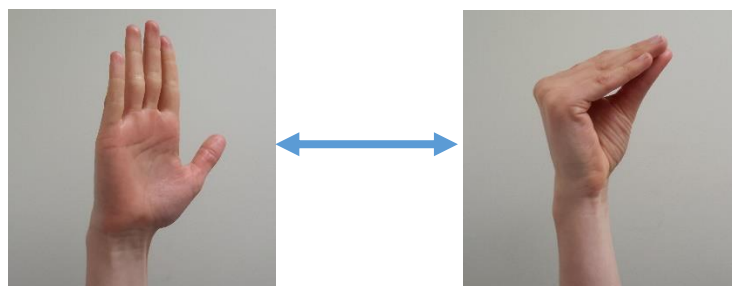
1. Bend and straighten your fingers.



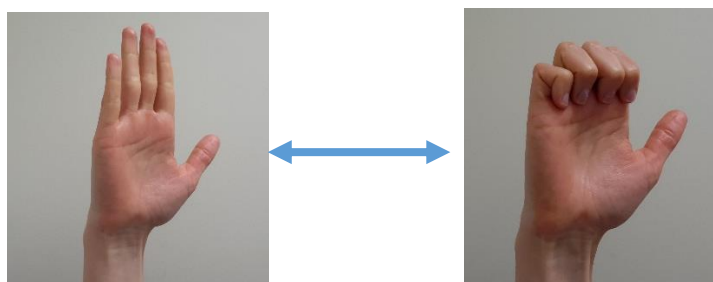
2. Spread your fingers apart and then squeeze them together again.



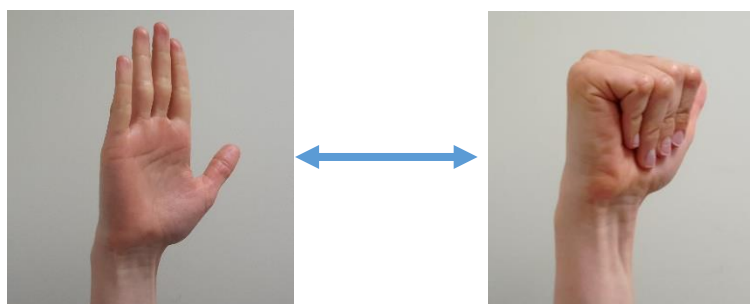
3. Squeeze your fingers together and bend at the knuckles, then straighten again.



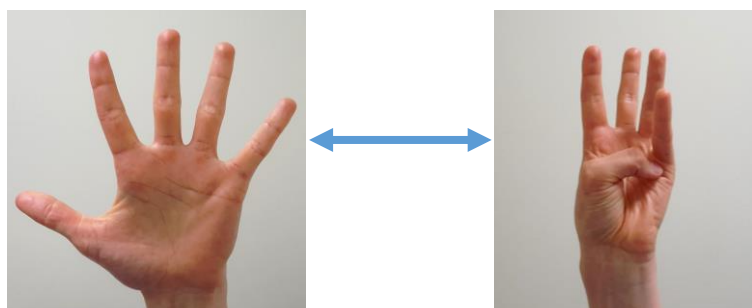
4. Gently curl your fingertips down towards the top of your palm and then straighten up again.



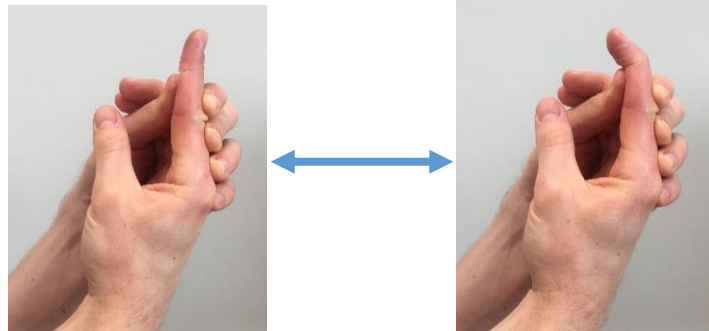
5. Gently bend your fingers down, reaching towards the bottom of your palm, to form a 'flat fist'. Straighten up again.



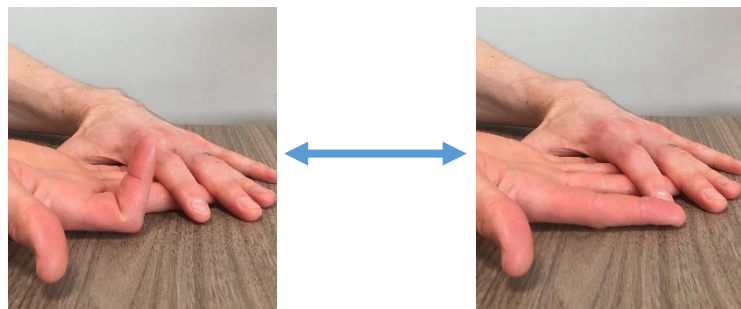
6. Gently touch the tip of your thumb to the tip of each finger in turn. Straighten up again each time.



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7. In this exercise, use your other hand to block the middle knuckle of the finger in a straight position. Keep the end joint free. Then, slowly bend the end joint down, hold for 2-3 seconds, then straighten back up.



8. Rest your hand on a table, with your palm facing up. Use your other hand to block the fingers you aren't exercising out straight, keeping the effected finger free to exercise. Then, slowly bend the middle joint up, hold for 2-3 seconds, then straighten back to the table.



## Hand Stretches

**Hold these stretches for 3-5 minutes, every 1-2 hours**

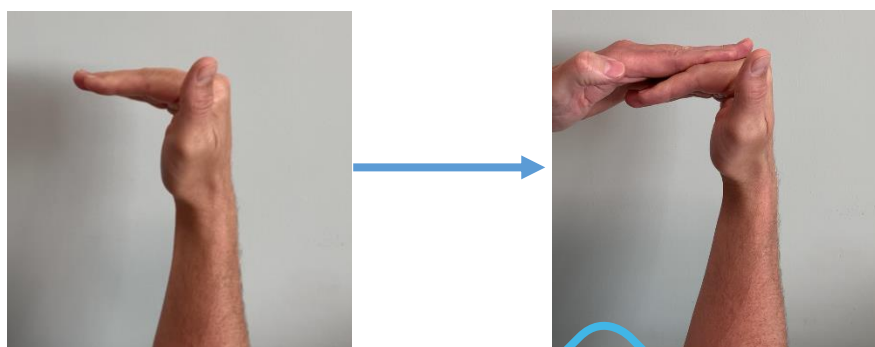
- These exercises are used to gain more range of movement in your hand.
  - They should be done to a limit of mild discomfort, but not pain.
  - If you are struggling, your therapist can advise on alternative exercises.
1. To help straighten the fingers, place your hand on a flat surface. Press down onto the back of the hand with your other hand, until you feel a stretch. This may be uncomfortable, but you should be able to tolerate it for 3-5 minutes.



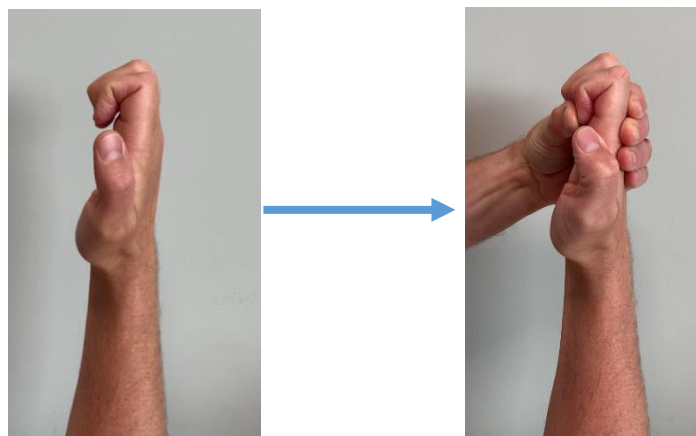
2. To help with bending the fingers, using your hand push the fingers into a fist, putting pressure across the nails and over the back of the fingers.



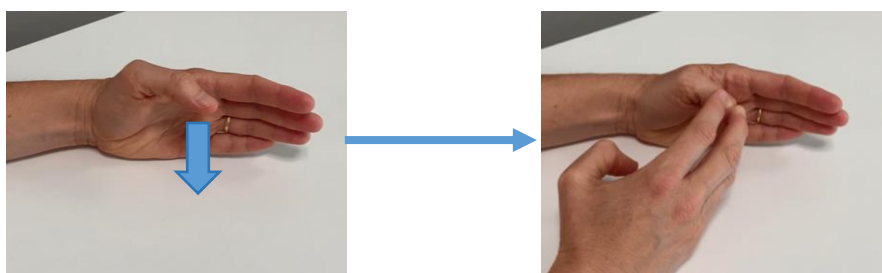
3. Keep your fingers straight and bend at the first knuckles. Use your other hand to push down on top of the fingers, stretching the joint that is bent.



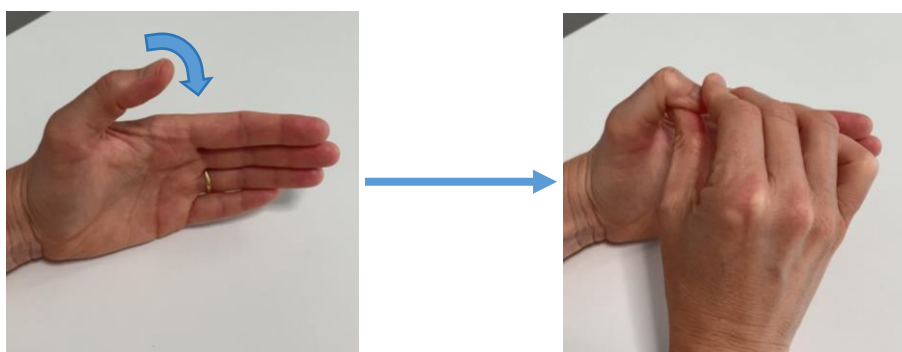
- Gently curl your fingertips down towards the top of your palm. Use your other hand to push your fingertips in until you feel a stretch.



- Bend your thumb across your palm, towards the base of your little finger. Use your other hand to help, pushing your thumb further across the palm.



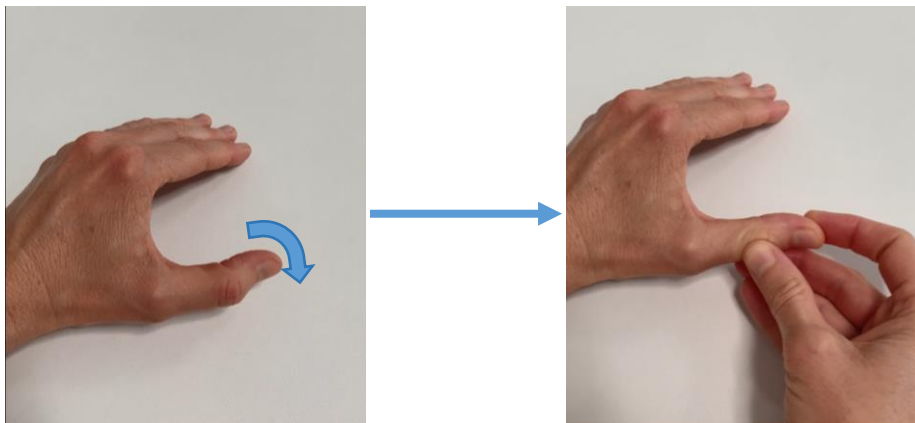
- Hold the tip of your thumb so that the end joint is free. Keep the thumb relaxed. Using the other hand, bend the end joint until you feel it stretching. One way to progress this is by gently applying more pressure to the stretch for 1 second, then easing off for 1 second, in a rhythmic way. However, this should only be done if your therapist advises you to.



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7. Hold the tip of your thumb so that the end joint is free. Keep the thumb relaxed. Using the other hand, bend the end joint until you feel it stretching. Then gently apply more pressure to add a stretch for 1 second and then ease off for 1 second. Repeat 10-30 times, depending on what your therapist has advised. This should be done in a rhythmic way and you should only do this exercise if you are advised by your therapist.



8. With your palm resting on a flat surface, use your other hand to pull your thumb sideways until you feel a stretch.



## Strengthening Exercises

**Aim to complete 10-20 repetitions, 3-4 times per day**

- You should work on these exercises until your hand starts to feel tired.
1. To strengthen your grip, fill a bowl with dry rice and begin grasping the rice, working it through your hand so it drops out the side of your hand. Alternatively, you can grasp a sponge or wring out a flannel. This works better when submerged in water, as you can squeeze the water out of the sponge or flannel.



2. Place your hand on a table top with the two end joints in your fingers hanging over the edge of the table. Relax the fingers so they curl. Then straighten the fingers forwards, without lifting the fingers or palm away from the table top.



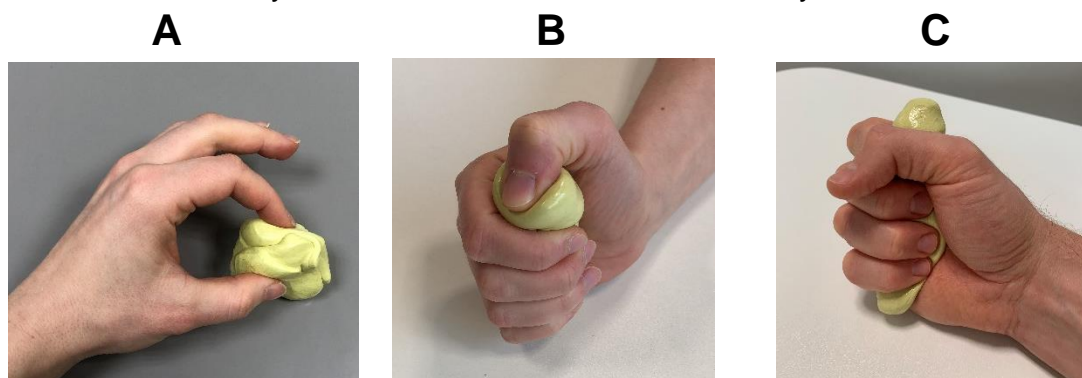
3. Place your hand on a table top with the thumb resting over the edge of the table. Keeping your palm flat on the table top, slowly lift the thumb towards the ceiling, before slowly lowering down towards the floor.



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4. You can strengthen using therapy putty, which can be bought online, to perform pinching (**A**), pushing down with your thumb (**B**) or squeezing with your fingers (**C**). You should work on these exercises until your hand starts to feel tired. This may take 30 seconds.



### Rehab tips for your hand and wrist

- **Warm water exercises** - Once all wounds or pin sites have healed, submerge the affected hand/arm in warm water for 5 minutes and practice the exercises you have been taught.
- **Massage** - Rub into the affected area for 3-5mins, every 2-3 hours. If your wounds are healed, you can use moisturising cream. Massage will help decrease swelling, improve movement, soften scars and de-sensitise the area affected. Your therapist can guide you.
- If you have any open wounds or pin sites, monitor for signs of infection (redness, hot, swollen, burning pain, discharge from wound or feeling feverish). If you have any of these signs then visit your GP or A&E.

**If you have any problems, please contact your therapist. Contact details are below.**

#### Hand Therapy

Brownsword Therapies Centre (Dept F1)  
Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust  
Combe Park, Bath, BA1 3NG  
01225 821241 | [www.ruh.nhs.uk](http://www.ruh.nhs.uk)

Please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) if you require this leaflet in a different format, or would like to feedback your experience of the hospital.

Email [ruh-tr.pals@nhs.net](mailto:ruh-tr.pals@nhs.net) or telephone 01225 825656.

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