

# MCPJ Arthroplasty

## Hand Therapy Patient Information

You have had a joint replacement operation (Arthroplasty) of the Metacarpophalangeal Joint (MCPJ) in your hand. After the operation, your hand will have been in a cast for 2-4 weeks, depending on your surgeon's decision.

On your first Physiotherapy appointment a splint will be made to protect your hand so that it continues to heal well. It is important you wear this **all the time** (except for some of your exercises). Keep your hand up as much as possible, to help reduce swelling.

### Rehabilitation (0-3 weeks after cast removal)

- Start gentle exercises and massaging your scar, as instructed by your physio.
- You should only use your hand for your exercises.
- Wear your splint at all times, removing it only for some of your exercises.

### Exercises

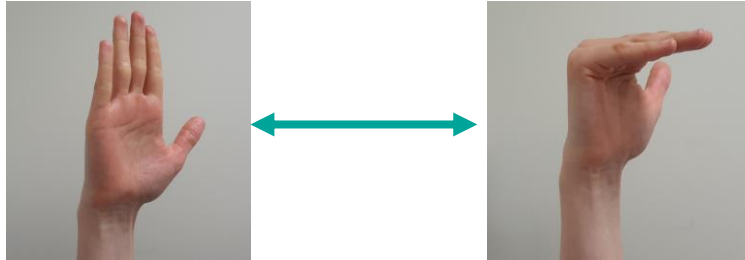
#### Aim to do these every hour

1. With your splint on, slowly bend and straighten your fingers, over the top of the splint. Do this 20 times.





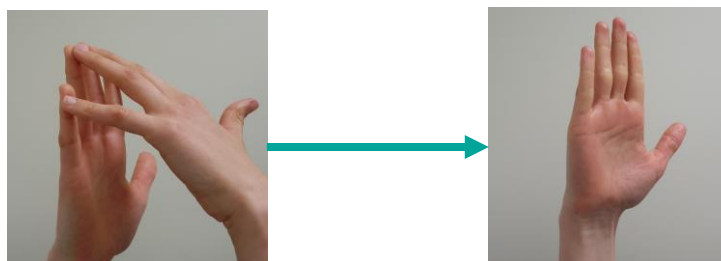
2. Remove your splint. Start with your fingers out straight. Keeping the fingers straight, slowly bend at the operated knuckle joints. Do this 10 times.



3. Place your hand flat on a table. Slowly lift your fingers one at a time (starting with your index finger) and move them across towards your thumb. Do this 10 times. **Do not do this towards your little finger.** Repeat for other fingers.



4. Using your other hand, push your fingers straight and try and keep them there. Hold for 5 seconds then relax before repeating 5 times.



5. If your wound has healed, use hand cream to massage your scar. Do this for 3-5 minutes regularly.



## Rehabilitation (3-6 weeks after cast removal)

- Remember to keep your hand up to help prevent it swelling.
- Continue to wear your splint all the time.
- When doing your exercises, make sure that your fingers are moving normally and not 'going off' to one side.
- **Do not** lift anything heavy with your hand.

### Exercises

1. Continue all of your current exercises.
2. From 4 weeks you can start some gentle strengthening activities e.g. scrunching up paper/gently squeezing a sponge. Make sure your fingers bend in a straight line when you are doing this.



## Rehabilitation (6-8 weeks after cast removal)

- The healing around your replacement joints is getting stronger.
- You only need to wear your splint at night for the next 2 weeks (unless otherwise instructed by your physiotherapist).
- Return to using your hand for light work.
- Avoid staying in one position for long periods (e.g. a clenched fist) or any sideways forces on your fingers (e.g. lifting a carrier bag).

### Exercises

1. Strengthen your hand further by using therapy putty, playdough or a firmer sponge daily. Work on gripping for approximately 30 seconds or until your hand feels tired.





## Rehabilitation (8+ weeks after cast removal)

- Gradually increase your strength and the use of the hand.
- If you feel safe to, you may return to driving at 10 weeks.
- Keep an eye on how your fingers are moving i.e. in a straight line and not drifting to one side
- Contact your Physiotherapist if you have any problems.

## Rehab tips for your hand and wrist

### 1. Warm water exercises

Ensure all wounds or pin sites have healed. Submerge the affected hand/arm in warm water for up to 5mins and practice the exercises taught by your therapist.

### 2. Massage

Rub into the affected area for 3-5mins, approximately 4 times per day. You can use moisturising cream. Massage will help decrease swelling, improve movement, soften scars and de-sensitise the area affected. (Ensure all open wounds or pin sites have healed and scabbed over, particularly if using moisturising cream).

### 3. If you have any open wounds or pin sites, monitor for signs of infection (Redness, Hot, Swollen, Pain, Discharge from wound or feeling feverish). If you have any of these signs then visit your GP or A&E.

### 4. Whilst wearing the splint you should regularly check your skin condition and ensure the splint is fitting comfortably. If you have an issue, contact your physiotherapist.

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

#### Hand Therapy

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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 / 826319.