Hand Exercises
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You may experience some of the following symptoms:

**Swelling**

Your hand may be swollen. Swelling may change throughout the day or vary with activity.

**To decrease swelling:**

› Raise your hand above the level of your heart when resting.
› Bend your fingers often, 10 times every hour you are awake.
› If you have been given a compression stocking, wear it during the day. Take it off at night and when you do your exercises.
› Raise your hand at night by placing pillows under your arm.
› Use ice.

**Stiffness**

- Stiffness in the hand is common, especially if you have swelling.
- Moving your hand can help get back motion in the joints.
Pain

- You should have mild to moderate discomfort when doing your exercises and with activity.
- If your pain increases, you may need to change or decrease some of the activities that you are doing. It is important that you keep doing the exercises we teach you, but decrease the number of repetitions or how often you are doing them. Speak to your physiotherapist if you have questions.
- You can use heat, ice, rest, and pain medications to help manage your pain.

Your exercise routine will include:

- **Soaking** your hand in warm water for 15 minutes **before** you do your exercises. This will help soothe the pain and make it easier to move. You can also use a hot water bottle or a heating pad wrapped in a towel before doing your exercises.
- **Applying ice after exercise** – use an ice pack or a bag of frozen vegetables over your hand for up to 10 minutes. You can also apply ice additional times in the day to help with pain and swelling.
Finger active range of motion
✓ Do these exercises 3 times per day.

1. Bend all of your fingers so that the tips of your fingers touch the base of your finger. Bend each finger separately and then with all of your fingers together. Hold for ______ seconds. Repeat ______ times.

2. Straighten all of your fingers as much as you can. Straighten each finger separately and then straighten with all of your fingers together. Hold for ______ seconds. Repeat ______ times.
3. Bend your knuckles while keeping your fingers straight. Hold for ______ seconds. Repeat ______ times.

4. Curl your fingers to make a fist. Hold for ______ seconds. Repeat ______ times.

5. Spread your fingers apart as far as they can stretch. Hold for ______ seconds. Repeat ______ times.
Finger active assisted range of motion
✓ Do these exercises 3 times per day.

Metacarpal Phalangeal (MCP) Joint
Using your opposite hand, bend your finger at the first row of knuckles/joints. Hold for ______ seconds. Repeat ______ times.

Proximal Interphalangeal (PIP) Joint
Using your opposite hand, bend your finger at the second row of knuckles/joints. Hold for ______ seconds. Repeat ______ times.
Distal Interphalangeal (DIP) Joint
Using your opposite hand, bend your finger at the knuckle/joint closest to the tip of your finger. Hold for _____ seconds. Repeat _____ times.

Finger abduction
Using your opposite hand, move your fingers apart by applying pressure near the ends of your fingers. Hold for _____ seconds. Repeat _____ times.
Thumb active range of motion
✓ Do these exercises 3 times per day.

Flexion and extension
Move your thumb across your palm as far as you can. Then move your thumb out into a “Thumbs up” position. Hold for ______ seconds. Repeat ______ times.

Abduction and adduction
Start with your palm up, move your thumb away from your palm so that your thumb is pointed at the ceiling. Move your thumb back to touch your palm, with your thumb in line with your index finger. Hold for ______ seconds. Repeat ______ times.
Opposition
Move your thumb to touch the tip of each finger. Hold for ______ seconds. Repeat ______ times.

Tendon gliding exercises
✓ Do these exercises 3 times per day.

Hook fist
Hold for ______ seconds. Repeat ______ times.
Straight fist
Hold for ______ seconds. Repeat ______ times.

Full fist
Hold for ______ seconds. Repeat ______ times.
DIP flexion (active blocked)

Hold your ____________ finger firmly at the middle so that only the tip joint can bend. Hold for ________ seconds. Repeat ________ times. Do this ________ times per day.

Strengthening exercises

✓ Do these exercises 3 times per day.

Finger flexion

Hold a stress ball, play dough, or putty in the palm of your hand. Squeeze your fingers and thumb towards you palm, pressing into the ball/putty/dough. Hold for ________ seconds. Repeat ________ times.
Finger extension
Place an elastic band or putty around the ends of your fingers and thumbs. Start with your fingers and thumb close together and move your fingers apart against the resistance of the band or putty. Hold for ______ seconds. Repeat ______ times.

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The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.