

# General hand exercises to reduce stiffness

## Occupational Therapy

Information for Patients

Last reviewed: February 2023

Next review: February 2026

Leaflet number: 422 Version: 3

### Introduction

You have been given the following exercises to improve and/or maintain the range of movement in your hands and help reduce stiffness. These can be helpful if you have conditions such as arthritis.

The exercises work on every joint and muscle group in the hand. They will not cause any damage if done for short periods. Your therapist will advise how often to do them and how many repetitions they would like you to do.

It may help to warm up your hands first either by putting them in warm water, using wheat packs or gently massaging with hand cream.

You may feel some discomfort while doing the exercises but this should quickly ease once you have completed them. Remember to listen to your body. If you are at all concerned then speak to your therapist.

**Health information and support is available at [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)  
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit [www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk](http://www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk) for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals  
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact [InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk](mailto:InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk)

## Finger exercises

Start with the fingers as straight as possible. (Starting position).



Bend the first 2 joints of your fingers down.  
Keep the knuckles straight (Making a hook).  
Return to the start position.



## Finger exercises



Bend your fingers at the knuckle joint. Then bend at the 2nd knuckle (Making a flat fist).  
Return to start position.

Then try to make a full fist.  
Return to the start position.



Repeat      times



Place your hand flat on the table. Spread your fingers and thumb apart and then close them back together again.



Touch your thumb to the tip of each finger in turn keeping both thumb joints slightly bent.

**Repeat      times**

## Finger walking exercise

Place the palm of your hand flat on the table.

Move your thumb out to the side.



Lift up your first finger (index) and move it towards the thumb and then place it down.



Next lift up the middle finger and move it towards the index finger and then place it down.

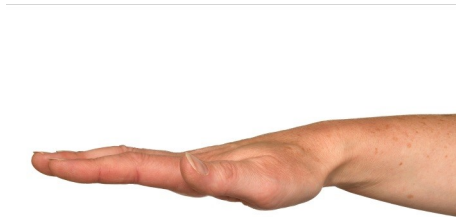
Repeat this with the next 2 fingers.



To repeat this exercise pick your hand up off the table before placing it down again in the start position.

## Wrist exercises

Start with your elbows bent and tucked into your sides, palm of hands facing down. Turn your hands so that your palms face upwards.



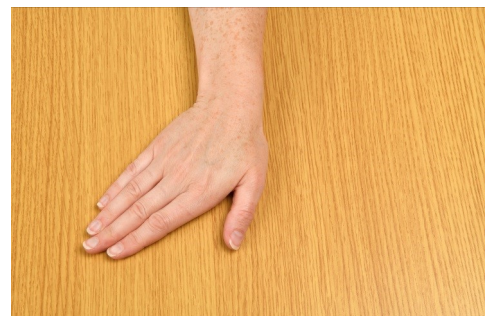
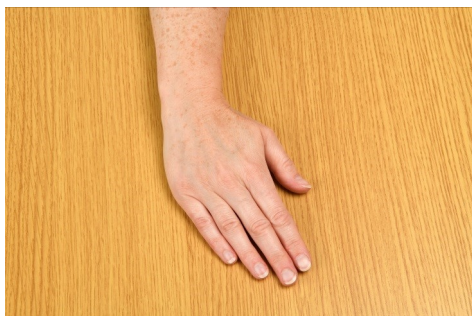
Repeat            times

Support your forearms on a table or arm of a chair with your hands resting over the edge. Move your wrist down and then bring it back up again



Repeat            times

Start with your forearms on the table, palm down. Move your wrist from side to side.



Or replace the above 3 wrist exercises by completing circles with your wrists in both directions.

## Strengthening exercises

Rest your hand and forearm on the table and squeeze the putty in your hand as hard as you can for 2 to 3 seconds. Relax.



Place your hands flat on the table with the putty between the fingers and squeeze the fingers together. Repeat between the other fingers.



Roll the putty into a sausage and squeeze the putty between your thumb and first finger, squeezing as much as you comfortably can.



Repeat with the other fingers.

**Repeat**                      **times**

**Contact details**

Contact number: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupational Therapist: \_\_\_\_\_

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔  
على هذه المعلومات بلغة أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل  
જો તમને અન્ય ભાષામાં આ માહિતી જોઈતી હોય, તો નીચે આપેલ નંબર પર કૃપા કરી ટેલિફોન કરો

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਗਏ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।  
Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

If you would like this information in another language or format such as EasyRead or Braille, please telephone 0116 250 2959 or email [equality@uhl-tr.nhs.uk](mailto:equality@uhl-tr.nhs.uk)