

Hand Exercises

Exercise Tips:

- Before exercise, warm your hands with warm water, a contrast bath, moist heat or wax.
 - If an exercise makes your hands more painful, STOP and contact your therapist.
 - Quality of movement is more important than quantity; do the exercises slowly and carefully, even if you can't complete the number of repetitions suggested.
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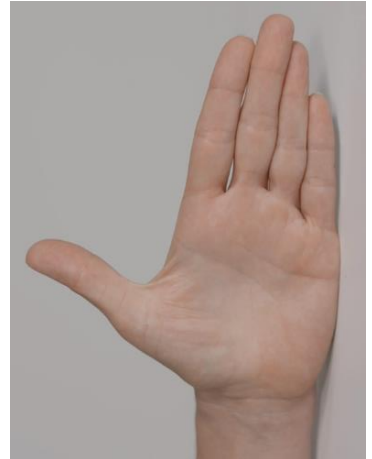
1. Thumb waves

- Try to touch your thumb to the base of your pinky
- Stretch your thumb out as far as possible, making a nice wide “L” shape at the first web space
- Hold the L shape for 3-5 seconds before bringing the tip of the thumb back towards the base of the pinky.

As you stretch your thumb away from the rest of your fingers, try to bring your thumb up into the same plane as the rest of the hand (i.e. you could make your hand flat on the table).

Repeat 5-10 times.

If it is hard to make the L shape, try one of the following exercises to **Soften the Web Space**.



2. Soften the Web Space

- a) Use a small ball between your hand and the table to massage the muscle in the web space between the thumb and index finger. Hold the pressure on areas that feel tight until the muscle releases.
- b) You can also stretch the muscles in the first web space by placing one hand against the other, web space to web space. Hold for 30 seconds to warm the web space, and then push both hands against each other, holding pressure for another 30 seconds. Relax and repeat the exercise two more times.



- c) A third option is to use a kitchen clip to apply pressure to the muscles in the web space. You should feel pressure but not pain when the clip is on. Leave the clip on for 3-5 minutes.



3. “Okay” Positioning

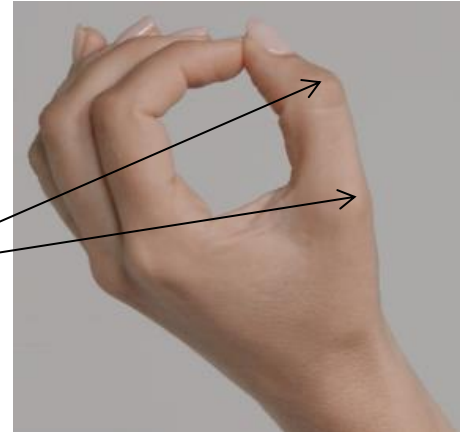
Make an “O” by touching the tip of the thumb to the tip of the index finger. Keep *all* of the joints in your thumb bent to make the circle as round as possible.

You should be able to see two knuckle “bumps” in the thumb.

If you cannot make the circle round, use your other hand to gently push the thumb knuckles out into an “O” shape. Press the tips of the fingers together gently, making sure the “O” stays round as you apply pressure.

If it is too difficult to reach the thumb to the index finger, start by touching the tip of the thumb to the tip of the pinky finger and work your way over to the thumb.

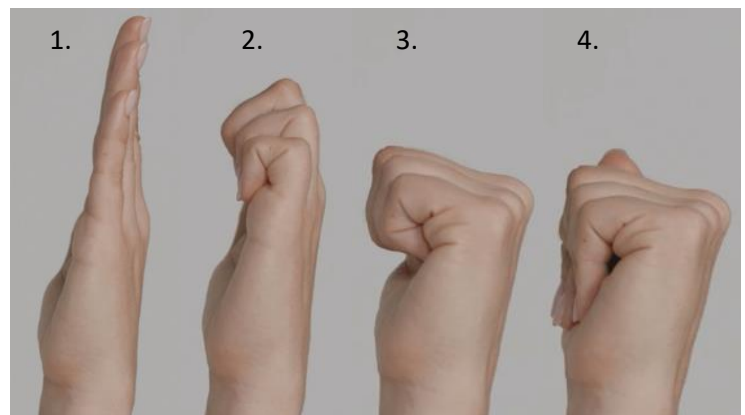
Repeat 5-10 times.



4. Fist Curls

Move your fingers through the following motions, one after the other, as shown:

1. Start with your fingers and wrist straight.
2. Curl the tips of your fingers down to try to touch the base of your fingers. Keep your big knuckles straight.



3. Roll in to a gentle fist.
4. Straighten your fingertips to make a straight fist. Return to starting position.

Repeat 5-10 times.

If you cannot touch your fingertips to the base of your fingers, you can gently use your other hand to encourage the fingers to bend into a hook fist.

