

Musculoskeletal Occupational Therapy

Hand Therapy Service

Pacing activity

When you begin to use your injured hand for activity and exercises, it is likely you will feel some discomfort. It is normal to experience this discomfort; however you need to perform the exercises and use your hand, but be careful not to overuse it. Striking a balance between rest, activity and exercise to avoid pain and swelling will allow your hand to recover more quickly.

Exercises

Perform the exercises given to you little and often. You will feel discomfort during the exercises; however this should stop within 30 minutes of completing the exercises.

- 1 **Breaking the job up into little steps:** For example, do a little bit of gardening in the morning and again in the afternoon instead of one session that lasts several hours
- 2 **Limiting the amount of work and delegate:** Do only essential tasks (such as using pre-chopped vegetables)
- 3 **Plan ahead:** Plan the week's activities and distribute the heavy tasks over the days
- 4 **Use the correct equipment:** Use lightweight tools or tools with a larger grip. Ask your therapist for suggestions.
- 5 **Use efficient methods:** Slide objects instead of lifting them, use backpacks instead of carrier bags, use jar openers, avoid prolonged grips, use wheeled carts instead of carrying, etc.
- 6 **Rest:** Rest gives your injured hand time to heal – splints may help you to rest your hand.

If you develop persistent pain rest the hand until the pain stops. Pain can be relieved by over the counter pain medication (e.g. paracetamol or ibuprofen) and cold or hot packs depending on what is more comfortable. When the hand recovers return to your exercises and activity, however do it less often or with less effort.

Gradually build up your exercise and activity level as you can comfortably do so. Remember, “no pain, no gain” is a good principle if you are an Olympic weightlifter, not if you have an injured hand!

This leaflet is for guidance only and is not intended to replace advice from your qualified practitioner. Please read the leaflet fully before undertaking the exercises. If you have any concerns or questions, please speak to the therapist in charge of your care or call 01536 748093 and leave a voicemail for your therapist to call you back.