

INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

Rheumatology Occupational Therapy: Therapeutic putty hand exercises

..... repetitions times per day

Therapeutic putty exercises are designed to help improve the strength in your hands, wrists and thumbs. They are best carried out sitting at a table with your arms at a right angle and forearms resting on the table to ensure you are in alignment.

Your occupational therapist will have provided you with an appropriate putty strength depending on your individual need.

To look after your putty:

- Wash hands before use
- Use only on clean surfaces
- Keep putty in a plastic bag or an airtight container
- Keep it in a cool place.

Do I push into pain?

No. Exercise slowly, taking the movement to **discomfort but NOT pain** (this way you aim to minimise any unnecessary swelling occurring).

1) Warm up

Gently squeeze the putty in your fist until putty has become softer.



2) Roll out putty (finger extension)

Using one hand at a time with fingers straight, roll out the putty until about 2cm in diameter. Squeeze into a ball to repeat the process.



3) Roll and pinch (finger extension and flexion)

Begin by rolling the putty (as exercise 2) then gently pinch the roll of putty between the tip of your thumb and the tip of each finger in turn. Squeeze into a ball to repeat the process.



4) Thumb flexion

Holding the ball of putty in your fist and gently press your thumb into the putty.



5) Finger adduction exercises

Begin by rolling the putty out, as previously. Use two hands and a pen (or similar) to press down into putty, creating ridges about 1.5cm apart. Then place index and middle fingers into the gaps either side of a ridge and gently squeeze together. Repeat with middle and ring and then ring and little fingers.



6) Hand extension exercise

Begin with rolling out the putty into a shorter, thicker tube. Connect the two ends to create a ring. With your arm supported on the table and fingers and thumb tips touching, place the ring over all the digits.



Slowly and gently open all fingers and thumb, stretching out the ring. Roll the putty out and create the ring again to repeat.



Contact details

If you have questions or concerns please contact your Rheumatology occupational therapist:

.....
On (01623) 622515, extension 6878
(King's Mill) or (01636) 685885 (direct line Newark).

Further sources of information

NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk/conditions

Our website: www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk

Patient Experience Team (PET)

PET is available to help with any of your compliments, concerns or complaints, and will ensure a prompt and efficient service.

King's Mill Hospital: 01623 672222

Newark Hospital: 01636 685692

Email: sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net

If you would like this information in an alternative format, for example large print or easy read, or if you need help with communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please let us know. You can call the Patient Experience Team on 01623 672222 or email sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net.

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant health professional would give you. External websites may be referred to in specific cases. Any external websites are provided for your information and convenience. We cannot accept responsibility for the information found on them. If you require a full list of references for this leaflet, please email sfh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net or telephone 01623 622515, extension 6927.

To be completed by the Communications office
Leaflet code: PIL202508-05-TPHE
Created: October 2017 / Revised: August 2025 /
Review Date: August 2027