

## Upper Limb Unit: Hand Therapy

# MCP Joint Replacement: post operative therapy

You have recently undergone surgery to replace the knuckle joints of your hand. During surgery the existing damaged joint is removed and replaced with a silicone implant or 'spacer'. At the same time tendons in the fingers may also be repositioned to help prevent the fingers 'drifting' in the direction of the little finger (ulnar drift).

During the first few weeks after surgery new tissue begin to grow around the artificial joint to form a joint capsule. It is important to keep the joint moving during this time to ensure maximum movement is gained after surgery. Splints must also be worn to keep the joints in a safe position and protect the tendons.

### Wound care

Your wounds will be reviewed and redressed each time you attend the hand therapy unit. Stitches will be removed between 10 and 14 days after surgery, according to how quickly the wounds heal. If you have any concerns about your wounds between therapy appointments please contact your GP.

After stitches have been removed and the wounds are fully healed you should massage your scars daily with a non-perfumed moisturising cream such as E45 or Aqueous. This will help to soften the scars and prevent any adhesions between the scar tissue and surrounding structures, which may limit movement.

### Splints

You will be provided with two splints to be worn at all times for the first 5-6 weeks after surgery. One splint should be worn to rest the hand overnight. You will benefit from wearing this splint longer term to prevent ulnar drift of the fingers recurring. The second splint should be worn during the day. You will be advised on exercises to do whilst wearing this splint.

You may be provided with additional splints after 6 weeks according to your individual needs. Your therapist will discuss these with you as appropriate.

### Function

You should use the hand in very light daily tasks only for the first 6 weeks after surgery. You may then gradually increase use of the hand under guidance of your therapist up



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to 12 weeks. At this time sufficient healing will have occurred and it will be safe to use the hand in any task.

Your therapist will offer any further appropriate advice to help you return to maximum function after your surgery.

### Exercise

It is essential that exercises are completed regularly at home to regain maximum movement of the joints after surgery. The following exercises should be completed **every three to four hours** during the day with your splint removed.

Exercises A and B should be completed every one to two hours whilst still wearing your day splint.

**Do not complete any exercises until you have been shown how to do so safely** with your splint removed. Exercising in the incorrect way with the splint removed risks damage to the joints and soft tissues.

It is important that you **do not** attempt to bend all 3 joints of the fingers at once i.e. make a full fist for the first five weeks after surgery.

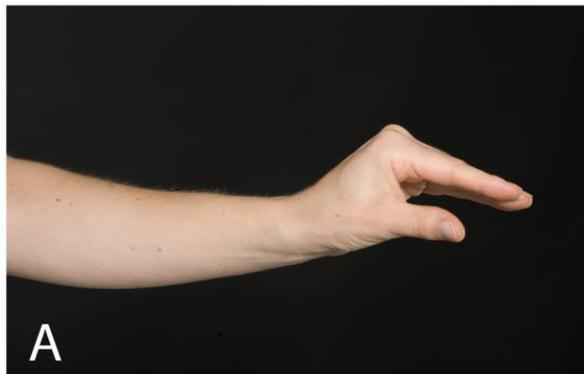
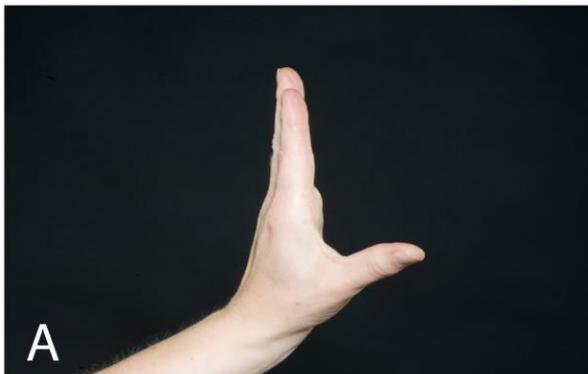
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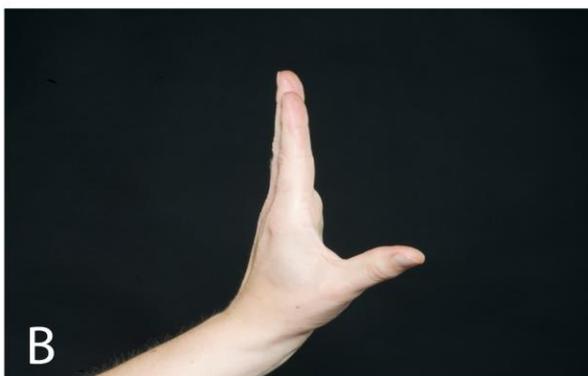
### Document History

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Published	August 2011
Reviewed	Dec 2018
Review	Dec 2021
Version	4.1
Reference No	HIC/LFT/1265/11

# Patient Information



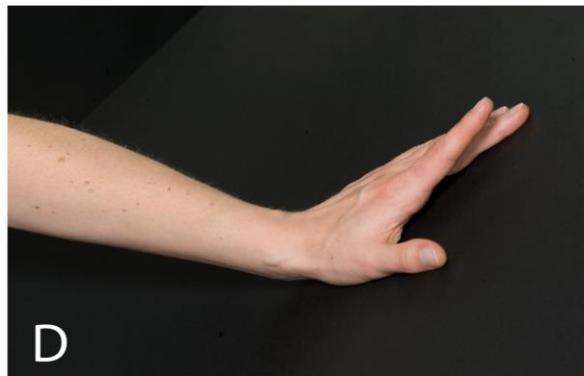
Bend and straighten the fingers from the operated joints wearing your envelope splint



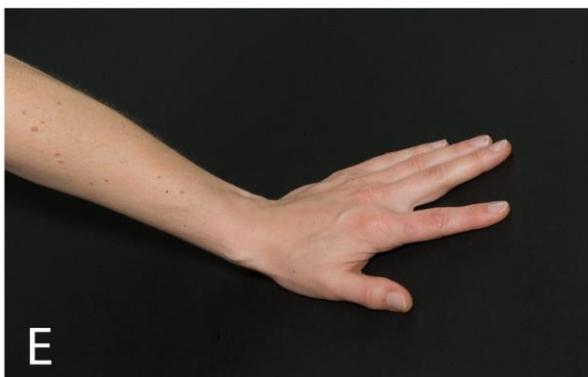
Bend and straighten the fingers from the top two joints



Push the hand flat on the table



With the hand resting on the table straighten each finger from the operated joint



With the hand flat on the table, slide (not lift) each finger towards the thumb Reposition the hand between each set of exercises