



## Hand Therapy

# Thumb stability exercises

When the thumb has arthritis or has been injured it can become painful or unstable. It can then start to move and be used in a way that worsens the pain and instability. The following exercises can help the thumb move and grip in a better way. This can help reduce pain.

Do the exercises **slowly and gently**. These exercises should be done pain free. As a general rule, expect some achiness after exercise but it should not last for more than 2 hours. Even on bad days, still do the exercises but do fewer repetitions. Increase repetitions **very gradually**.

**When doing these exercises, do not overextend or over stretch the 2<sup>nd</sup> joint.**

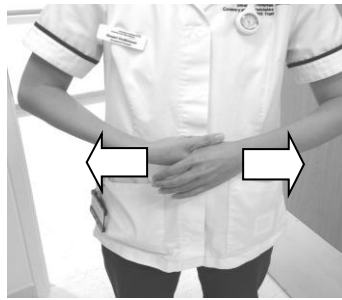


## Patient Information



1

Interlock your thumb web spaces together. Holding the thumb, massage the affected thumb web space area for several minutes.



2

Place hands in front of your body. Use the other hand to grasp the affected thumb near the base of the 3<sup>rd</sup> joint and pull.



3

Put your hands in front of your chest and grasp the affected thumb with your other hand. Stretch the web space and pull away from the chest



4

Using the other hand stretch the affected thumb up from the base (below the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> joints)

Please do \_\_\_\_\_ repetitions \_\_\_\_\_ times a day. Hold stretches for seconds.

**Please make sure during All the following exercises that the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> joints on your thumb are bent**

## Patient Information



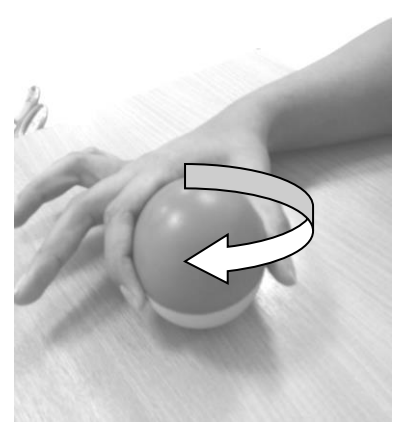
**1**

Keeping thumb on table with the top 2 joints bent and bring the thumb gently in and out as if playing the piano



**2**

With your hand on table, pretend your thumb is the mouth on a puppet. Open but do not fully close.



**3**

Hold the ball between your 1<sup>st</sup> finger and thumb and turn the ball clockwise. (Turn anticlockwise if it is your left thumb that is affected)



**4**

Make an O shape and use the unaffected hand to support the position. Keep that O shape position without support.



**5**

Curl the first finger and lift the finger upwards using the unaffected hand to gently resist that movement.

## Patient Information



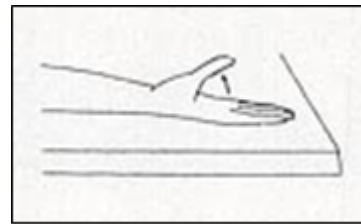
**6**

Raise the thumb upwards as far as possible as if hitch-hiking.



**7**

Move the thumb up and outwards making a C shape with the fingers.



**8**

With the palm facing up raise the thumb in line with the first finger

**When the above exercises can be done comfortably the following exercises can be completed:**



**9**

Stretch the band slowly by lifting the thumb upwards. Hold for 5 seconds then slowly lower.



**10**

Lift the thumb up and outwards (as exercise 7) Try to bring the first finger to the thumb keeping some tension in the band.

## Functional Use

When using the thumb in everyday tasks (pinching and gripping) try to keep the first and second joints bent and the wrist slightly back. You can try the following types of activities as part of your therapy or just observe thumb position in everyday use.

Activities which involve pinching: writing, holding plates, opening clothes pegs, tearing sheets of paper or fastening buttons.

## Patient Information

Activities which involve turning or twisting: putting nuts on bolts, using a key in a lock, undoing a jar / bottle tops.

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#### Document History

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