

Exercises for Rheumatoid Arthritis



Rheumatoid arthritis (RA) is an autoimmune inflammatory disease in which immune system attacks the healthy cells in the body by mistake, causing inflammation in the body. RA usually affects many joints at once such as joints in the hands, wrists, and knees.¹

Rheumatoid arthritis affecting our hand joints is difficult to manage. It can cause pain and stiffness which can get worse whenever the person uses his/her hand to perform many repetitive tasks. Medicinal options are available for treating hand arthritis. One easy and non-invasive way to reduce pain, stiffness, and swelling while improving joint flexibility is by doing hand exercises.²

Benefits of Hand Exercise: ²

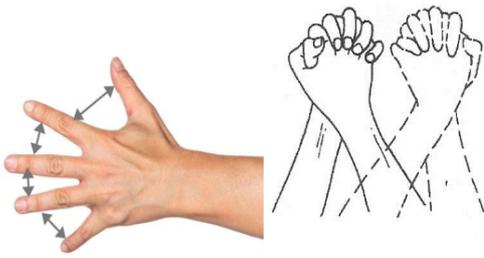
- Hand exercises can help to strengthen the muscles that support the hand joints.
- It supports one performing hand movements with less discomfort.
- Also, helps to keep ligaments and tendons flexible while further improving range of motion and hand function.
- Increase the production of synovial fluid, which can also improve joint function.

Here are some recommended exercises for hand arthritis.

Wrist Exercise:^{3, 4, 5}

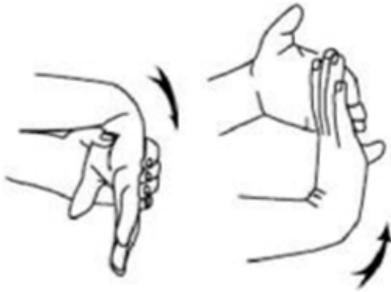
Exercise 1

- Stretch the fingers out so that they separate to create a space between all of your fingers
- Position the hands so that the fingers get interlock with each other.
- Move your hand facing upward.
- Slowly rotate the palm of your hand downward.



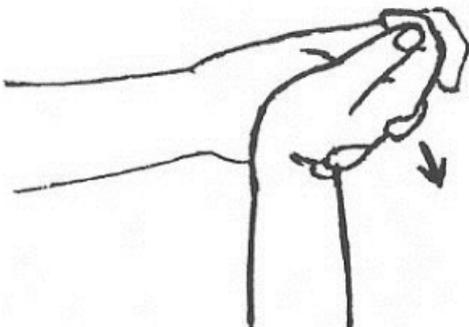
Turn your palms up and then down.

Exercise 2



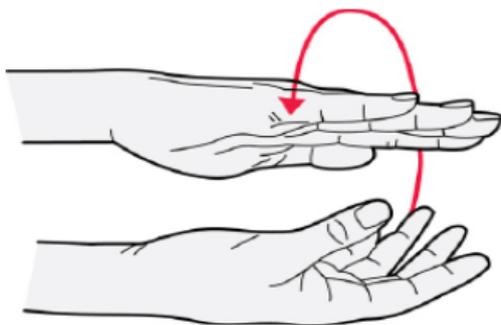
Place the forearm on a table with your wrist over the edge, palm down. Let your hand drop down and over press with the other hand.

Exercise 3

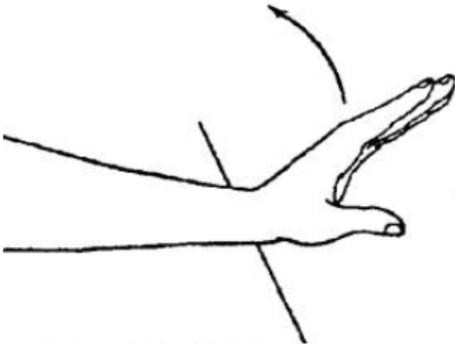


Bend your wrist back by over pressing with your other hand.

Exercise 4



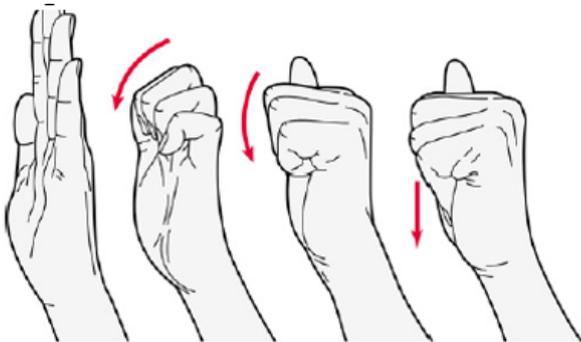
Gently rotate your wrist around in a circle, keeping your wrist open. Stop and rotate in the opposite direction.



Exercise 5

- Place your forearm on the table or arm of a chair so that your palm is down over the edge.
- Bend the wrist back and point the fingers forward and hold for 5 seconds.
- Next bend your wrist down the fingers downward and hold for 5 seconds.

Finger Exercise: ^{3, 4, 5}



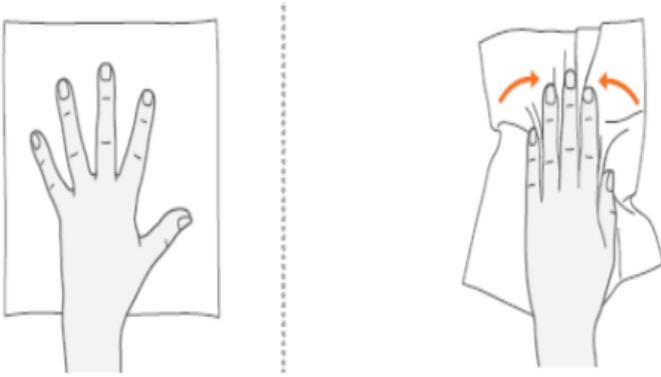
Exercise 1

- Start with the fingers extended straight out.
- Make a hook fist, return to a straight hand- (the original position before)
- Make a full fist, return to a straight hand.
- Make a straight fist, return to a straight hand.

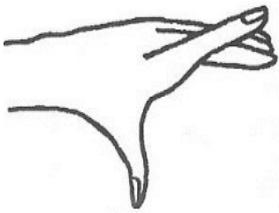


Exercise 2

Bend your knuckles as far as you can, while keeping the middle and tip joints straight. Slowly bring your fingers back out to straight.

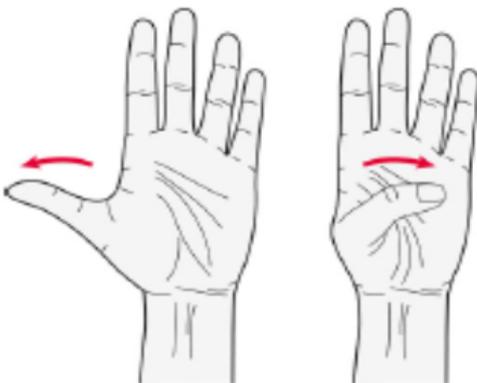


Exercise 3



- Place your palm on a tissue or towel on a table, fingers apart.
- Pull your fingers together by pressing the hand down into the table.
- Bunch up the towel between the fingers.

Exercise 4



- Palm on a table.
- Lift each finger one at a time, including the thumb.

Exercise 5



- Hold your hand out in front of you.
- Begin with your thumb positioned outward.
- Move the thumb across your palm and then back to the starting position.

Exercise 6



Circle the thumb.

Exercise 7

Make an 'O' shape with the thumb and each finger in turn.

Tips

- Do the exercises slowly and gently.
- You might feel some achiness after exercise but it should not last for more than two hours.
- Increase very gradually.

References

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