

Patient information factsheet

Desensitisation home therapy programme

We have written this factsheet to explain what exercises you can do at home to help with hand injuries as they heal. We hope it will answer some of the questions you may have, but if there is anything you don't understand, a member of your healthcare team will be happy to explain further.

The healing process

Hand injuries are often very tender during the early phases of healing. Unfortunately, this tenderness does not always go away by itself. The goal of these exercises is to reduce sensitivity by bombarding the nerve endings with sensory stimuli.

Treatment

Massage

Using your uninjured thumb or fingers, massage in circular movements, starting in the area most comfortable around the scar and progressing to massage directly over the scar. Begin with light pressure and gradually increase.

Tapping

Tap lightly on the tender area of your hand. This can be done with your other hand or a light object, such as a pen. Gradually increase the pressure.

Pressure

Using a finger, apply pressure to the tender area of your hand. Maintain pressure for about 15 seconds.

Textures

Stimulate the sensitive area with a variety of textures, such as cotton wool and velcro. Begin with the least irritating and gradually increase the texture as your tolerance to touch improves.

Immersion

Fill a number of containers with different particles, such as rice or lentils. Immerse the sensitive area into the container with the least irritating particles and make small stirring movements.

Continue to place the tender area into increasingly uncomfortable containers until the sensation becomes more tolerable.

Therapist: _____ Date: _____

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Contact us

Hand therapy team

Therapy outpatients

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