

Elbow Exercises

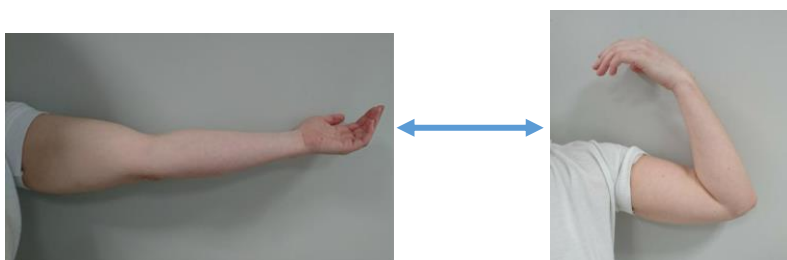
Hand Therapy Patient Information

These exercises are designed to help you regain movement and strength in your elbow by keeping your joints supple and to help your arm move more freely.

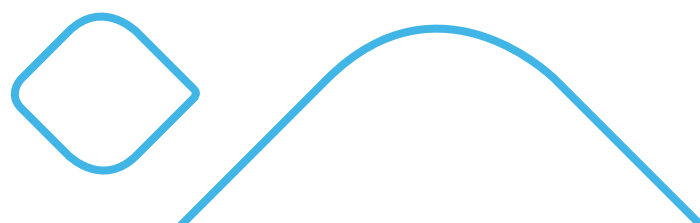
- Aim to complete them every 1-2 hours, increasing the number as you improve. Your Physiotherapist will advise you if you are required to do differently.

Range of Movement Exercises:

1. Warm up your arm by bending and straightening your elbow. Repeat 20 times.



2. Tuck your elbow into your side and at a right angle, slowly turn your hand over so that your palm is facing the ceiling. Then turn your palm back down to face the floor. Repeat 10 times.



Stretching Exercises:

1. Bend your elbow as far as you can. Then with your other hand, hold around your forearm and bend the elbow further, holding the stretch for 3-5 minutes. This may be uncomfortable but not painful, so you can tolerate it. If you are unable to apply enough pressure with your other hand, you can try leaning into a wall to help the elbow bend further.



2. **Arm Hang** - Support your arm in front of you level with your shoulder. Support the upper arm with your other hand or the arm of a chair. Relax your arm and allow gravity to help your arm to straighten. Hold for 3-5 minutes.



3. Place your wrist against a worktop or table. Straighten your elbow as far as you can. Then, use your other hand to push the elbow straighter. Hold the stretch for 3-5 minutes. This may be uncomfortable but not painful, so you can tolerate it.



4. If you are struggling with exercise 5, you can use your other hand to help. To help turn your palm down (**A**), keep your elbow tucked into your side. Hold across the top of the forearm with your other hand and turn/twist the forearm further. To help turn your palm up (**B**), keep your elbow tucked into your side. Using your other hand, wrap your fingers under and around the forearm. Turn/twist the forearm up. Both of these stretches are designed to be held for 3-5 minutes.

A



B

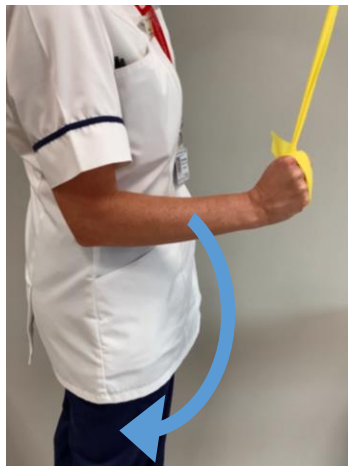




Strengthening Exercises:

1. Using a weight (dumbbell or therapy band), slowly bend your elbow, lifting the weight towards your shoulder. Then lower the weight slowly towards your hip. Repeat this 10-20 times, 2-3 times per day.



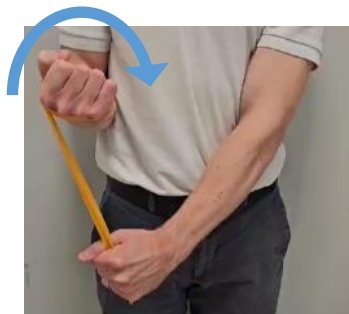
2. Hold one end of your therapy band with your other hand at shoulder height. Then, with the arm you're strengthening, pull down on the band, straightening the elbow. Repeat this 10-20 times, 2-3 times per day.



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3. Sit or stand with your elbows tucked in at your side. Hold the therapy band in both hands, as shown below. With your unaffected arm, pull the band downwards and hold it still. Then turn your affected arm palm up to the ceiling and hold for 3-5 seconds.



4. Sit or stand with your elbows tucked in at your side. Hold the therapy band in both hands, as shown below. With your unaffected arm, pull the band downwards and hold it still. Then turn your affected arm so the palm is facing down to the floor and hold for 3-5 seconds.



Rehab tips for your hand, wrist and elbow

1. **Warm water exercises**

Ensure all wounds or pin sites have healed. Submerge the affected hand/arm in warm water for up to 5mins and practice the exercises taught by your therapist.

2. **Massage**

Rub into the affected area for 3-5mins, approximately 4 times per day. You can use moisturising cream. Massage will help decrease swelling, improve movement, soften scars and de-sensitise the area affected. (Ensure all open wounds or pin sites have healed and scabbed over, particularly if using moisturising cream).

3. Use your hand for light duties. No heavy lifting or carrying (as guided by your therapist).

4. If a splint is provided, your therapist will direct you on when you should wear it (i.e. full time, at night, when performing housework)

5. If you have any open wounds or pin sites, monitor for signs of infection (Redness, Hot, Swollen, Pain, Discharge from wound or feeling feverish). If you have any of these signs then visit your GP or A&E.

6. Gently strengthening

- grip soft rolled socks/sponge
- squeezing therapy putty
- rice grasping

If you have any problems, please contact your therapist. Contact details are below.

Hand Therapy

Brownsword Therapies Centre (Dept F1)
Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust
Combe Park, Bath, BA1 3NG
01225 821241 | www.ruh.nhs.uk

Please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) if you require this leaflet in a different format, or would like to feedback your experience of the hospital.

Email ruh-tr.pals@nhs.net or telephone 01225 825656.
