

Thumb Arthritis: Exercises

Introduction

Here are some examples of exercises for you to try. The exercises may be suggested for a condition or for rehabilitation. Start each exercise slowly. Ease off the exercises if you start to have pain.

Your doctor or physiotherapist will tell you when you can start these exercises and which ones will work best for you.

How to do the exercises

Thumb IP flexion



1. Place your forearm and hand on a table with your affected thumb pointing up.
2. With your other hand, hold your thumb steady just below the joint nearest your thumbnail.
3. Bend the tip of your thumb downward, then straighten it.
4. Repeat 8 to 12 times.
5. Switch hands and repeat steps 1 through 4, even if only one thumb is sore.

Thumb MP flexion



1. Place your forearm and hand on a table with your affected thumb pointing up.
2. With your other hand, hold the base of your thumb and palm steady.
3. Bend your thumb downward where it meets your palm, then straighten it.
4. Repeat 8 to 12 times.
5. Switch hands and repeat steps 1 through 4, even if only one thumb is sore.

Thumb opposition



1. With your affected hand, point your fingers and thumb straight up. Your wrist should be relaxed, following the line of your fingers and thumb.
2. Touch your affected thumb to each finger, one finger at a time. This will look like an "okay" sign, but try to keep your other fingers straight and pointing upward as much as you can.
3. Repeat 8 to 12 times.
4. Switch hands and repeat steps 1 through 3, even if only one thumb is sore.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor or nurse call line if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

For 24/7 nurse advice and general health information, call Health Link at 811.

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