

Hand Osteoarthritis - Protecting Your Hands

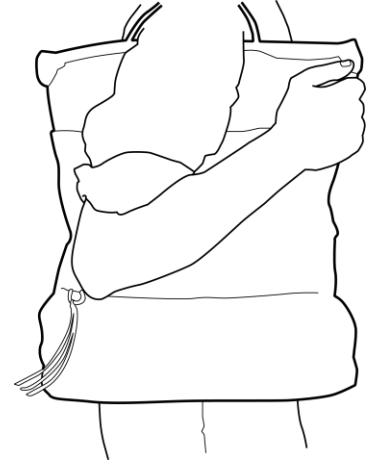
Protecting the joints in your hands is important to:

- Reduce joint stress and pain
- Prevent deformity
- Make your daily activities easier

Use the following strategies **at ALL times**, not just when your hands hurt:

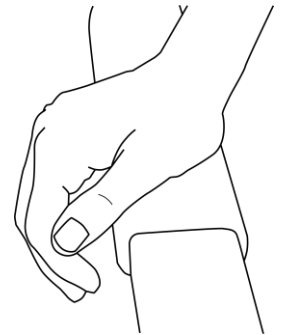
1. Use your bigger joints to complete a task

- Carry your handbag with your shoulder or forearm. Carry only what you need.
- Push or pull items rather than carry them, e.g. use a wheeled cart for groceries
- Carry large or heavy items with two hands. Hug the item close to your body.
- Close drawers/doors with your hip or choose automatic doors when possible
- Push up from a chair using the palm of your hand, not your fingers. Choose higher chairs or use a firm cushion on your chair.



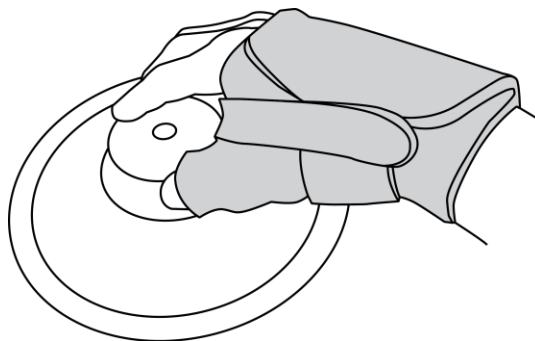
2. Plan ahead

- Vary tasks and change your hand position often. Take breaks every 20-30 minutes.
- Spread heavier tasks throughout the week
- Rest your hands before they are tired or sore
- Organize your workspace to ensure hands and wrists are in a neutral posture



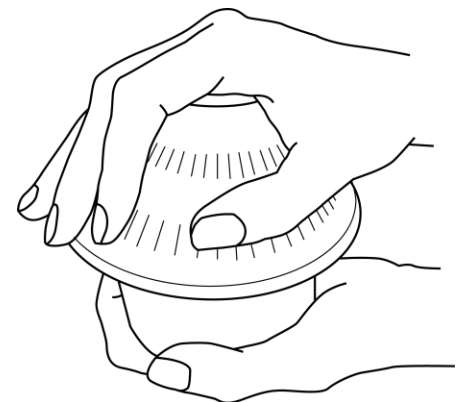
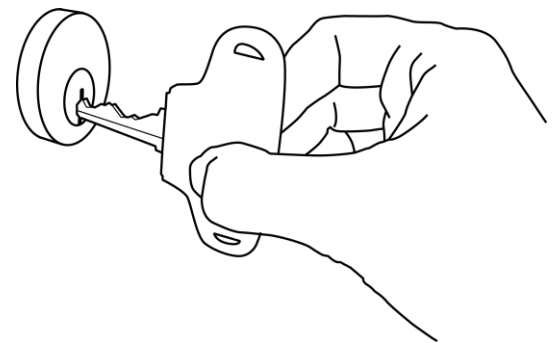
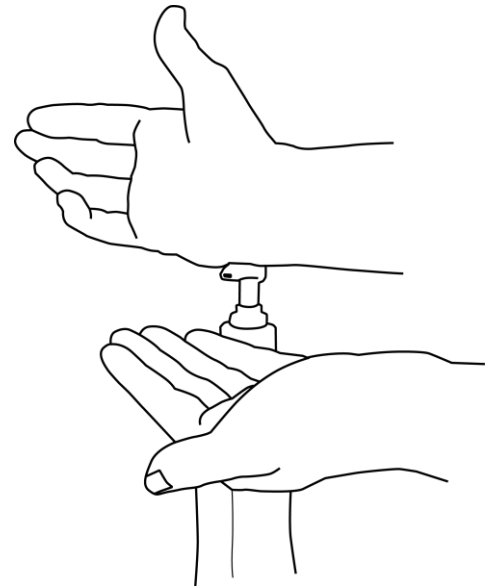
3. Use splints to protect your joints, either at rest or during activity

- Talk to your care team to determine if a hand or thumb splint would be helpful for you



4. Change your grip and use adapted equipment to avoid tight gripping/squeezing and force through the thumb

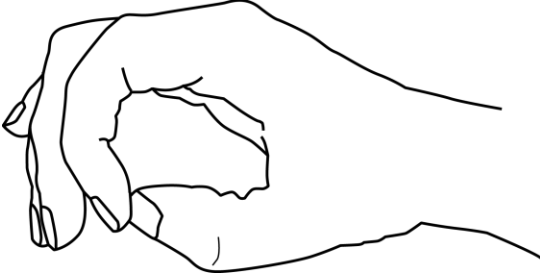
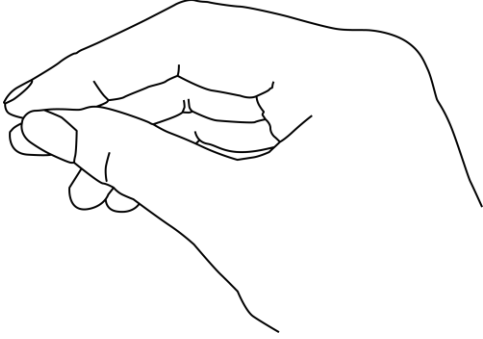
Activity:	Try:
Writing, gardening	→ Buy large-handled tools or make your own handles larger with foam tubing
Cooking	→ Adapted kitchen aids e.g. finger vegetable peeler, ergonomic salad spinner
Opening jars and cans	→ Jar seal-opener, non-slip grip, electric can opener
Twisting tops, squeezing tubes	→ Products with pumps
Wringing out cloths	→ Use the heel of your hand; sponge or washing brush
Driving	→ Foam steering wheel cover
Pumping gas	→ Use the lever on the handle to avoid squeezing for a long time
Pinching a key	→ Key holder
Reading	→ Book holder, books on tape, e-books
Opening mail	→ Easy-to-squeeze scissors
Dressing	→ Button hook, zipper pull
Opening doors, turning taps	→ Lever taps and door handles
Gripping slippery items, e.g. removing credit cards from a wallet	→ Use a piece of non-slip mat, e.g. Dycem; accordion-style wallet
Self-care, e.g. cutting nails, washing hair, etc.	→ Adapted equipment from a pharmacy or medical supply store



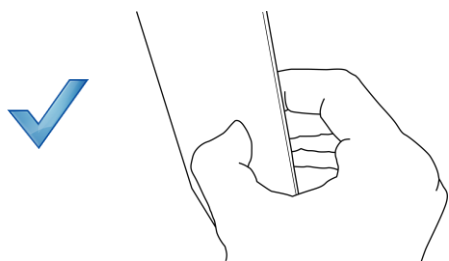
** Adapted equipment can often be found at medical supply stores, department, hardware or kitchen stores

5. Follow the exercises given to you by your healthcare team to keep your joints moving and your muscles strong

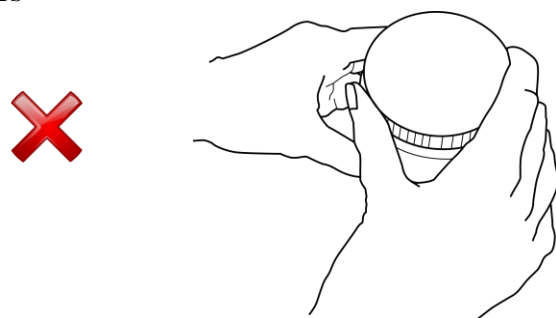
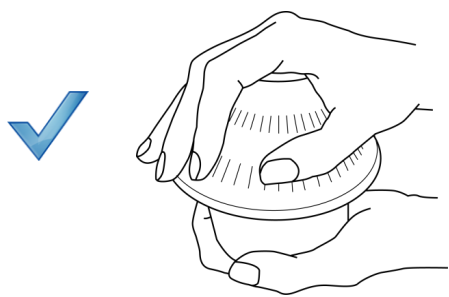
Hand Osteoarthritis - DO's and DON'Ts

<p>DO: ✓</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Try to use the “O” or “C” grip with all daily activities 	<p>DO NOT: ✗</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a pinch grip (flattening the space between your thumb and fingers) Use a lot of force through the thumb 
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Filing or Holding Books



Opening Jars



Dressing

