

## Pain Management for Hands

Some of these strategies may not be recommended for you if you have decreased feeling in your hands, problems with your circulation, open cuts or sores or other medical problems. Talk to your health care provider.

**Ice and Heat** - can be used many times in a day (4-5 times) but should not be left on for more than 15 minutes. Always use **ice** if your joints are hot and swollen.

### □ **Contrast Baths**

Soak hands and wrists in comfortable **hot water** for 30-45 seconds, then **ice water** for 10-15 seconds. Repeat for 10-15 minutes. End with cold water to help decrease swelling or with warm water to help increase hand movement.

### □ **Paraffin Wax Bath Therapy**

- Remove jewellery, wash and dry area to be treated
- Ensure that the paraffin wax is not too hot. Dip hand in to the wax approx 7 times, so that layers of paraffin wax build up. Allow it to harden.
- Wrap your hand in a plastic bag and then a towel to retain heat. Keep this on for approx 15 minutes.
- Peel off the wax. Your hand is now ready for massage, stretching or exercise.



**Topical creams and gels** - absorbed through the skin to provide temporary relief of pain. Always follow the product's instructions and speak to your doctor or pharmacist if you have questions.

- **General topicals** create sensation (heat or cool) at the skin to distract from joint pain. They may need to be trialled for a couple of weeks to see if they work. Examples:
  - Capsaicin – made from chilli peppers
  - Menthol – i.e. A535, Biofreeze, Absorbine Jr, Tiger Balm
- **Anti-inflammatory topicals** help to control chemicals that send pain signals to the brain. Examples:
  - Voltaren Emulgel 1% - over-the-counter
  - Diclofenac Gel, Diclofenac liquid (Pennsaid) - prescription

**Compression garments** - apply pressure to the affected area to help reduce swelling, pain and stiffness. Check the product package for sizing information.

- **Isotoner/Compression gloves** - wear the seams on the outside.
- **IMAK Arthritis Gloves**
- **Thermoflow Therapeutic Gloves**



**Isotoner gloves**



**IMAK Arthritis Gloves**



**Thermoflow Therapeutic Gloves**

- **Digi-Sleeve** - a pull-on tube worn over the full length of the finger with the tip of the finger exposed (ie. ½ the nail).
  - Measure the digi sleeve so that it is ½ inch longer than finger length.
  - Cut a small tab at the bottom of the mesh section to help pull the tube on and off
- **Coban Wrap** – wrap that sticks to itself and is wound from the fingertip to the base of the finger
  - Leave the fingertip exposed to check skin colour for blood flow
  - Make sure that you can bend and straighten your finger easily once it is wrapped



**Digisleeve**



**Coban Wrap**