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Exercises after Sustaining a burn to your hand

Physiotherapy Department

Following a burn injury, your hand may be red, swollen and painful. You may find difficulty moving your hand, which could, in turn, cause problems with work and even eating or dressing yourself.

This leaflet has been designed to instruct you in exercises.

Treatment of your burn

Figure 1.

There are two forms of dressings that can be used, either individual finger dressings or a bag. Both will require the same exercises to get better.

Your hand is placed in a sterile bag and secured around your wrist with a bandage.

The sterile bag will contain either paraffin oil or white flamazine cream. The bag provides the following:-

- 1) A sterile environment to allow good movement of your hand and fingers.
- 2) Enables both yourself and medical staff to monitor wound healing.

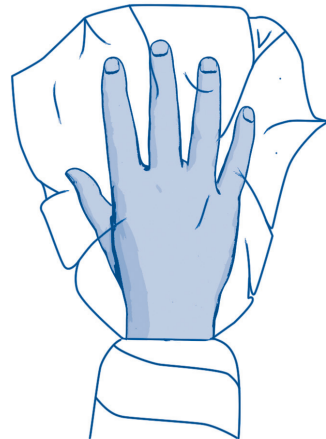


Figure 1

Now that you have completed your exercises, you will feel your hand is much looser. It is important to keep your hand moving normally throughout the day as your hand will stiffen up very quickly between each session.

Normal movement means using your hand for holding cutlery, cups, opening doors, brushing your hair, washing yourself (cover your dressings with a small bin liner or plastic bag) etc.

It is vital to do your exercises first thing in the morning as you will find this is the worst time of day for joint stiffness as you have not been moving your hand whilst asleep.

You can stop doing your exercises when :

- Exercising is very easy.
- You are using your hand normally throughout the day.

As your burns heal, your dressings will be reduced. The healed area will need an amount of **regular creaming** with a non-perfumed cream for example, oily cream, E45 or Nivea.

If you have any problems with these exercises, increasing swelling or pain, then do not hesitate to contact your Doctor via dressing room telephone : 01792 703984 or 703821.

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Figure 10.

Keep your hand in the same position as above and lift each finger in turn, up off the table and back down again.

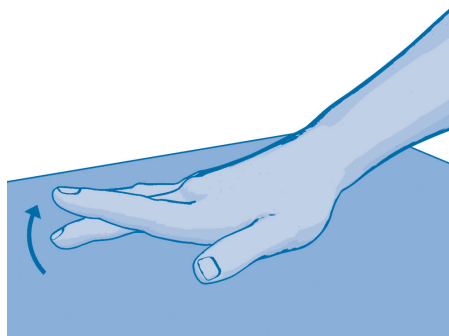


Figure 10

Figure 11.

Stand up, keep your hand flat on the table and straighten your elbow out fully. Now that your arm is straight, place your good hand over your fingers and press into the table. Progress this exercise by bringing your body-weight forward over your burnt hand. Maintain this pressure for a slow count of 10 and then ease off.

Repeat this 10 times.

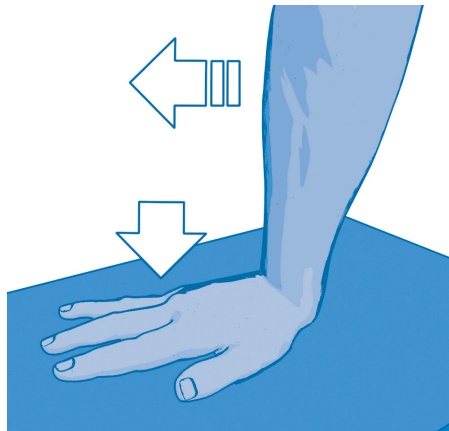


Figure 11

Figure 12.

Place thumb and index finger on a table and apply pressure down towards the table thus stretching the skin between thumb and index finger. Maintain this pressure for the count of 10 and then ease off.

Repeat this 10 times.



Figure 12

Advice for Swelling

Always keep your hand up in the air when walking around, sitting or sleeping (supported on two pillows). This will help to decrease pain and swelling. If the swelling remains, your joints will become stiffer, thus reducing your movement.

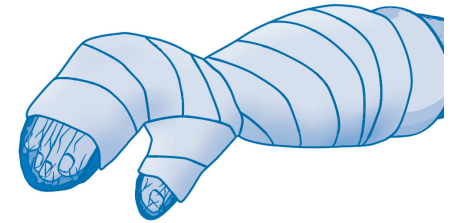


Figure 2

You may have been assessed by the Occupational Therapist and had a hand resting splint moulded for you. It is recommended that you wear this at rest and overnight to keep your hand in good position to help reduce swelling and ease of function and exercise. This may be secured in the early stages with a bandage (Fig 2) or later with Velcro straps (Fig 3).

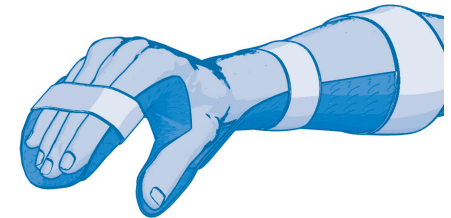


Figure 3

Pain Management

You may have been prescribed pain killers by the doctor. Ensure that you take these regularly. If you were not prescribed any pain killers, then take your normal pain killers regularly.

Hand Exercises

Repeat all the following exercises 20 times every hour with your hand above head height.

Figure 4.

Keeping your fingers straight, fully bend and stretch your knuckles to right angles from the palm.

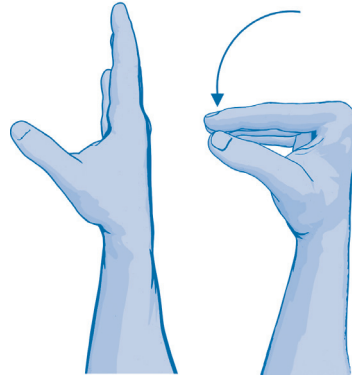


Figure 4

Figure 5.

Fully bend and stretch all fingers whilst keeping your knuckles straight.

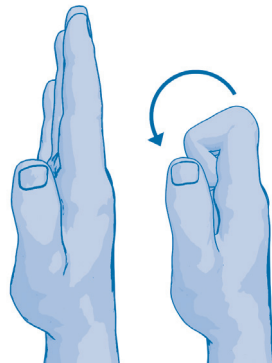


Figure 5

Figure 6.

Start with your fingers straight and then make a tight fist (remember to tuck your fingertips right in) again and stretch back out.

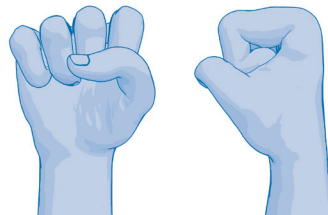


Figure 6

Figure 7.

Pinch the tip of each finger with your thumb.

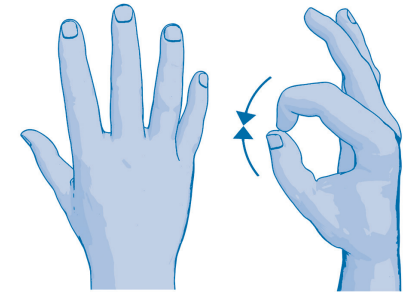


Figure 7

Figure 8.

Now that you can touch the tip of your little finger, try moving your thumb down towards the bottom of your little finger (this may be difficult initially, but practice makes perfect).

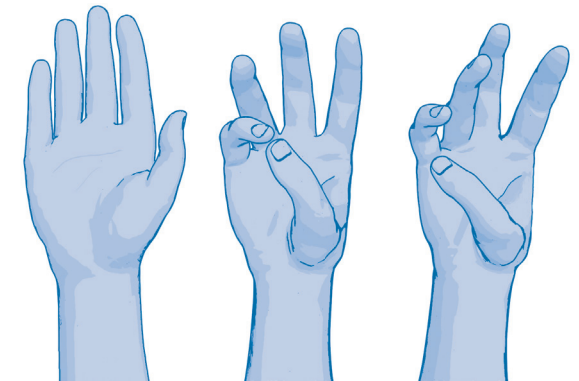


Figure 8

For the following exercises, place your hand flat on the table, you may sit or stand for these exercises. Repeat 20 times every hour.

Figure 9.

Make sure that your palm and the full length of your fingers and thumb are touching the table. Spread your fingers and thumb as far apart as possible, then squeeze them together again.

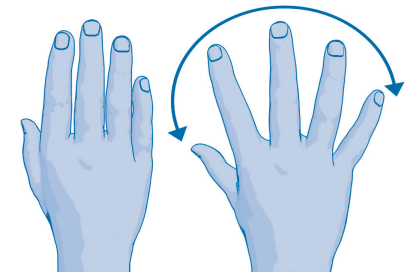


Figure 9