

ARTHRITIS (HANDS)

What is arthritis?

Arthritis occurs when one or more of your joints become inflamed, causing pain and/or stiffness that usually gets worse with age. When arthritis affects the joints in the hand, it can cause pain and stiffness. This often gets worse whenever the hands are used for completing repetitive tasks.

What are the signs and symptoms of arthritis?

Common symptoms of arthritis usually involve the joints and include:

- Pain
- Swelling
- Stiffness (especially in the morning or after resting)
- Redness
- Restricted range of motion
- Joint changes (nodules)



Can arthritis go away on its own?

Unfortunately, no. There is no cure for arthritis, but with the proper treatment, it can be managed effectively and progression can be stopped or delayed.

If you are suffering from arthritis in the hands, there are exercises that can help relieve pain by:

- Strengthening the muscles that support the hand joints
- Improving range of motion and hand function by keeping the ligaments and tendons flexible

Five hand exercises to ease arthritis pain

1. Make a Fist		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Start by holding your left hand out with all of your fingers straight.• Then, slowly bend your hand into a fist, placing your thumb on the outside of your hand. Be gentle, don't squeeze your hand.• Open your hand back up until your fingers are straight once again.
2. Finger Lifts		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Starting with your thumb, lift each finger slowly off the table one at a time.• Hold each finger for a second or two, and then lower it.• Do the same exercise with every finger of the left hand.
3. Wrist Stretches		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To exercise your wrist, hold your right arm out with the palm facing down.• With your left hand, gently press down on the right hand until you feel a stretch in your wrist and arm.• Hold the position for a few seconds.
4. Thumb Bends		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• First, hold your left hand out with all of your fingers straight.• Bend your thumb inward toward your palm.• Stretch for the bottom of your pinky finger with your thumb. If you can't reach your pinky, don't worry. Just stretch your thumb as far as you can.• Hold the position for a second or two, and then return your thumb to the starting position.
5. Finger Bends		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Start in the same position as in the last exercise, with your left hand held up straight.• Bend your thumb down toward your palm. Hold it for a couple of seconds.• Do the same exercise with every finger of the left hand.• Straighten your thumb back up.• Then bend your index finger down toward your palm. Hold it for a couple of seconds. Then straighten it.

Note: If you continue to experience any discomfort or pain, please consult a physiotherapist.