

Hand Strengthening Exercises

The following hand strengthening exercises are designed to improve strength of the muscles of the wrist and hand. You should discuss the suitability of these exercises with your physiotherapist prior to beginning them. Generally, they should only be performed provided they do not cause or increase pain.

Begin with the basic hand strengthening exercises. Once these are too easy, add the intermediate hand strengthening exercises. As your strength improves, the advanced exercises can then be added to the intermediate program.

Hand Strengthening – Basic Exercises

To begin with, the following basic hand strengthening exercises should be performed approximately 10 times, 3 times daily. As your hand strength improves, the exercises can be progressed by gradually increasing the repetitions and strength of contraction provided they do not cause or increase pain.

Tennis Ball Squeeze

Begin this exercise holding a tennis ball (figure 1). Squeeze the tennis ball as hard as possible and comfortable without pain. Hold for 5 seconds and repeat 10 times.



Figure 1 – Tennis Ball Squeeze (right hand)

Thumb Opposition

Begin this exercise taking your thumb to your index finger (figure 2). Squeeze your thumb and index finger together as hard as possible and comfortable without pain for 5 seconds, then move your thumb onto the next finger. Squeeze your thumb and middle finger together for 5 seconds and so on. Repeat 3 times on each finger.



Figure 2 – Thumb Opposition (right hand)

Finger Adduction

Begin this exercise with your fingers and thumb in the position shown (figure 3). Keeping your fingers straight, squeeze your fingers and thumb together in this position as hard as possible and comfortable without pain. Hold for 5 seconds and repeat 10 times.



Figure 3 – Finger Adduction (left hand)

Hand Strengthening – Intermediate Exercises

The following intermediate hand strengthening exercises should generally be performed 1 - 3 times per week provided they do not cause or increase pain. Ideally they should not be performed on consecutive days, to allow muscle recovery. As your hand strength improves, the hand exercises can be progressed by gradually increasing the repetitions, number of sets or resistance, provided they do not cause or increase pain.

Resistance Band Wrist Flexion

Begin this exercise with a resistance band around your fingers, your hand palm up as demonstrated (figure 4). Your elbow should be at your side and bent to 90 degrees, your forearm supported by your other hand. Slowly curl your wrist and fingers up against the resistance band tightening your hand and forearm muscles. Perform 3 sets of 10 repetitions as far as possible and comfortable without pain.

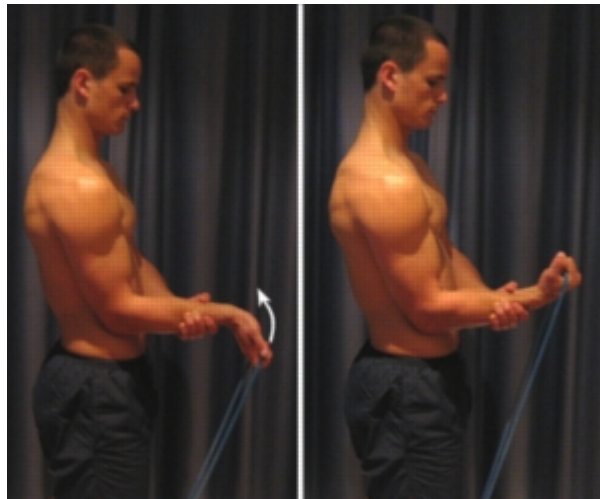


Figure 4 – Resistance Band Wrist Flexion (right hand)