

Advice and Exercise Sheet Following a Trapeziectomy

Introduction

You have been referred to Hand Therapy following Trapeziectomy surgery. At this stage your cast will have been removed and we can start your rehabilitation! This leaflet contains information to help you with your rehabilitation.

You have had a small bone at the base of your thumb removed. This bone is called your Trapezium. The aim of this is to relieve pain caused by arthritis. There are various techniques to this surgery which your therapist will be able to explain.

It is important that you attend your Hand Therapy appointments and follow the advice given to gain the best movement and function of your hand.

Pain management

The aim of the surgery is to relieve or reduce arthritic pain at the base of your thumb. It is common to have pain after surgery. It is hoped this post-operative pain will improve over time. It is recommended you take regular pain relief to enable you to complete your exercises and slowly return to using your hand, as guided by your therapist. If there is any further queries related to pain management please discuss this with your therapist or GP.

Recovery

Following the removal of your cast, you may be provided with a removable splint. You will need to remove it regularly to wash your hand, air the skin and to complete exercises. Your therapist will advise you when to start weaning out of your splint.

You will need to gradually increase the use of your hand. Your therapist will be able to guide you in terms of what activities to initially avoid. Patients typically are advised to undertake light activities for **three months**. After this period, you can gradually increase your activities following the advice of your therapist. **YOU MUST NOT DO ANY STRONG PINCH TYPE GRIPPING WITH YOUR THUMB FOR AROUND 10 WEEKS AFTER THE OPERATION.**

Your initial treatment goals will be:

- To regain the functional use of your thumb.
- To maintain a good thumb web space.
- To manage swelling and pain.
- To increase the range of movement of your thumb, fingers and wrist.
- To manage your scar healing.

Exercises

After being in a cast your thumb, fingers and wrist may feel stiff and weak. These exercises may help you regain movement, strength, stability and function. You will be instructed on which of the following exercises to do by your therapist. It is recommended to complete your exercises regularly throughout the day.

Initial Thumb, Finger and Wrist Exercises

1. Bend and straighten the end joint of your thumb. Repeat _____ times.



2. Bend and straighten your fingers.
When bending your fingers try to form a loose fist.
Repeat_____times.



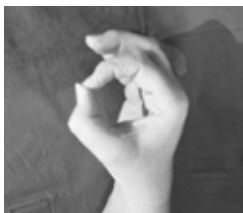
3. Touch the tip of your thumb to each fingertip.
Then slide your thumb down to the base of your little finger. Straighten your thumb and then repeat. Repeat_____times.



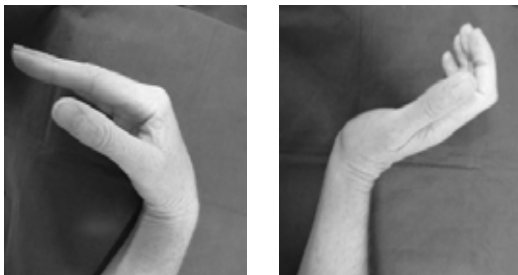
4. With the side of your hand on a table, try and make a big circle with your thumb. Stretch your thumb out to the side, then up to the ceiling and then down towards your little finger. Repeat_____times.



5. Make an okay sign, touching the tip of your thumb to the tip of your index finger. **When doing this exercise, make sure the thumb and index finger make an 'O' shape.**
Repeat_____times.



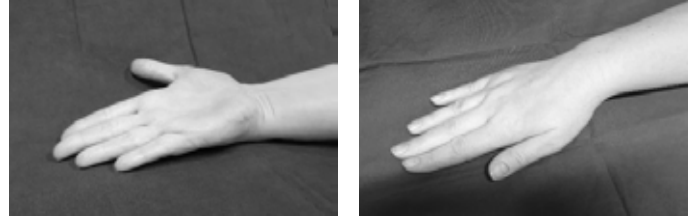
6. Bend your wrist forward and back keeping your fingers relaxed. Repeat_____times.



7. Move your wrist side to side. Repeat_____times.



8. Turn your palm to face up and then down keeping your elbow by your side. Repeat_____times.



Joint Protection

It is important to protect the base of your thumb base whilst it is recovering from surgery. The space from which the trapezium is removed will need time to heal to ensure it is stable.

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The body takes time to re-build the soft tissue structures around the thumb and to learn to move in a different way. As your thumb becomes stronger you will be able to relearn how to position and move your thumb in an optimal way.

Scar Management

It is recommended to massage the scar at least four times a day, with firm circular movements. Firstly you can massage your scar with a non-perfumed moisturiser especially if your scar is dry. It can then help to massage the scar without cream in order for the massage to be most effective.

If your scar is sensitive, you could try the following techniques:

- touching it with your other hand
- exposing it to different textures
- tapping it

Contact Numbers

If you have any concerns then please contact your therapist.

Rheumatology and Orthopaedics Hand Therapy Team: contact us on 01392 403522

Plastics Rehabilitation Team: contact us on 01392 402429

If you have any urgent problems over the weekend or after 5pm Monday – Friday you should contact the Emergency Department.

For further information:

www.versusarthritis.org

The Trust cannot accept any responsibility for the accuracy of the information given if the leaflet is not used by RD&E staff undertaking procedures at the RD&E hospitals.

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