

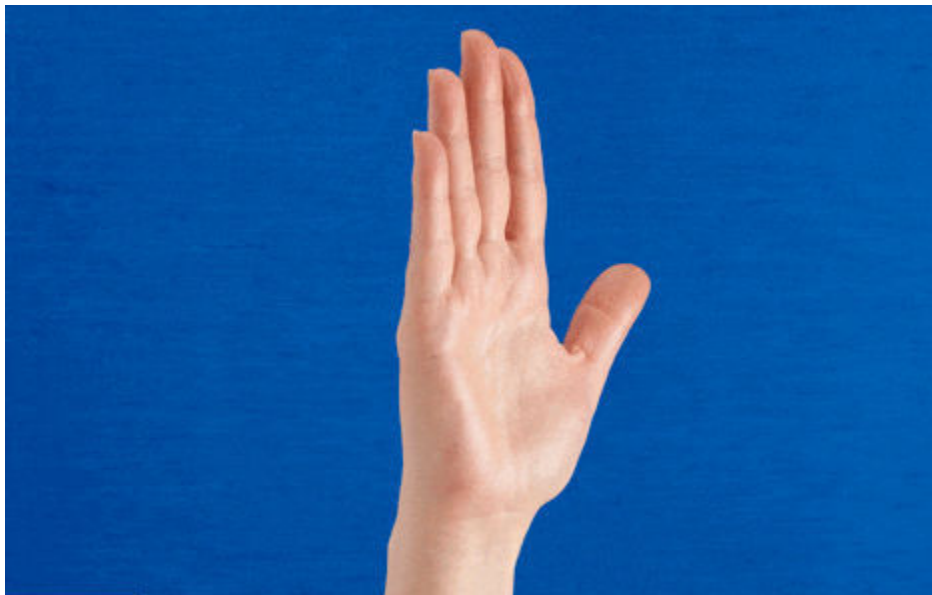
Hand exercises for arthritis. Prof. Fahim Khan

Swelling, pain and stiffness in the joints are common symptoms for people with arthritis. If you have arthritis, your health care professional may recommend hand exercises to help you improve joint flexibility and range of motion.

Knuckle bend

Start by holding your hand and fingers straight and close together. Bend the middle joints of your fingers. Keep your knuckles straight.

Moving slowly and smoothly, return your hand to the starting position. If you can, repeat this exercise five times with each hand.



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Fist stretch

Start by holding your hand and fingers straight and close together, as if for a handshake. Rest your forearm, wrist and hand on a tabletop or other flat surface. Close your fingers into a gentle fist. Wrap your thumb around the outside of your fingers. Don't squeeze.

Moving slowly and smoothly, return your hand to the starting position. Repeat the exercise 10 times with each hand.



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Thumb stabilization

Start by holding your hand and fingers straight and close together. Gently curve your fingers, as if your hand is wrapped around a can or bottle.

Moving slowly and smoothly, return your hand to the starting position. Repeat the exercise five times with each hand.



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Fingertip touch

Start by holding your hand and fingers straight and close together. Form a circle by touching your thumb to each fingertip.

Moving slowly and smoothly, touch your index finger to your thumb. Hold for five seconds, then remove your index finger. Follow with your middle, ring and small fingers. Repeat this exercise five times with each hand.



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Finger walk

Rest your hand on a flat surface, such as a tabletop, with your palm facing down. Move your thumb away from your fingers.

Start with your index finger. Move it up and toward your thumb. Next move your middle, ring and small fingers one at a time up and toward your thumb. Repeat this exercise five times with each hand.



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Do each exercise slowly and smoothly. These exercises should not cause pain. If you have pain, stop the exercises and relax. When you are ready, do the exercises again but slower and with less intensity.

If the pain continues, talk with your health care professional or physical therapist.