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Home Program for Recovery of Motion after Injury or Surgery

(to be used only in conjunction with specific instructions from your doctor including when to start, frequency and duration of exercises, timing of return appointment, etc.)

1. Use a container or sink large enough to immerse your hand and wrist. Include your forearm and elbow if these joints are stiff. A bathtub or Jacuzzi is fine.
2. Fill the container with comfortably warm water (like a bath).
3. Immerse your hand and wrist. Include your forearm and elbow if these joints are stiff
4. Soak for 15 minutes, 3-4 times a day, 7 days a week. Rest for the first 5 minutes. Enjoy the warmth.
5. For the next 5 minutes and still under warm water, open and close your fist, touch your thumb to the base of your little finger, bend your wrist back and forth. If your forearm and elbow are affected, alternately turn your palm up/down, open and close your elbow.
6. For the final 5 minutes and still in warm water, take your other hand and gently assist sluggish joints—first in one direction, then in the other. Make the sluggish joints hurt a little as they are stretched. A feeling of stretch or slight pain is necessary for improvement.

Your stiff joint(s) should ache for 15-20 minutes after you finish each session. If you have pain longer, use less force during the next session. If you do not have any pain/aching when you finish, be a little more forceful during the next session.

As pain subsides and motion becomes easier, perform steps 5 and 6 every two hours during the day, for instance while watching television, during boring meetings, waiting in traffic.

You should note a gradual improvement in motion over several weeks. If you have not recovered full motion after two weeks, contact the office for consideration of a referral to a hand therapist.

Six to twenty-four months are required for the “tight” feeling, noted especially in the morning, and swelling to subside. If tightness and swelling are bothersome after you have recovered full motion, warm water and massage reduce these residual symptoms.