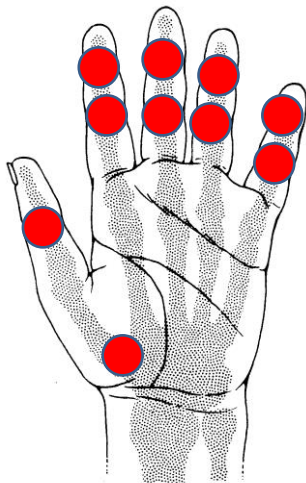


Tips to Reduce Pain and Make Activities Easier to Do

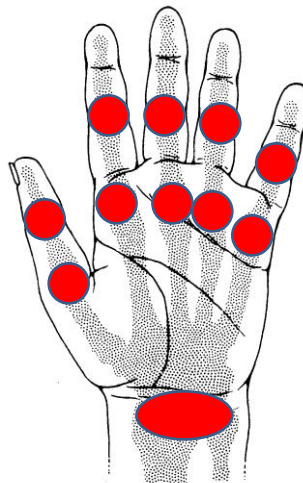
Arms and Hands

Joints at Risk

Osteoarthritis



Rheumatoid Arthritis



How to Protect your Joints

Respect Pain

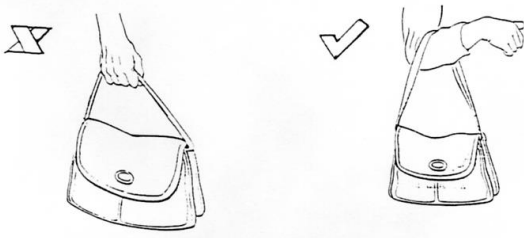
- Pain occurring with or after an activity is a warning sign. The activity may be too stressful or have been done for too long
- Get to know when you will have less pain and work within that time
 - Change how you do a task
 - Change how long you do an activity

Pace Yourself – Balance Activity and Rest

- Take short breaks often while you are doing an activity
- Give your hands and arms a break. Switch to something else that uses another part of your body

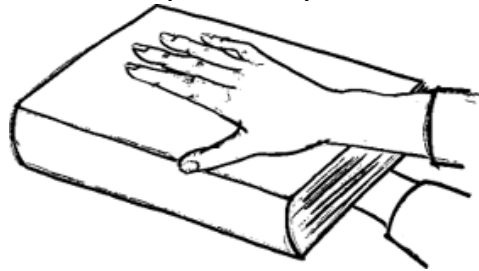
Use Stronger, Larger Joints

- Carry your purse over your forearm or shoulder
- Use a backpack or wheeled cart to carry groceries or other heavy loads



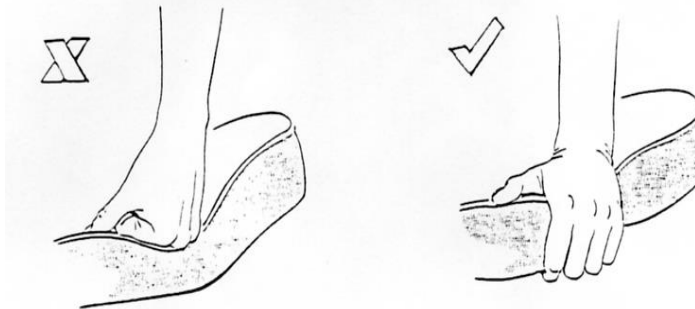
Use Two Hands

- Use 2 hands to carry heavy things. Keep it close to your body
- Use an open hand position



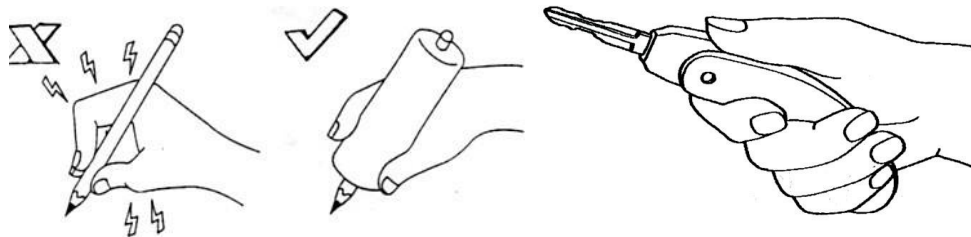
Avoid Pressure on the Backs of your Fingers

- Push up from chairs or low surfaces with the palms of your hands



Avoid Side Pinch

- Use a pen grip or large key extension to change your grip



Avoid Tight Grasp

- Use padded or large handles to reduce the force needed to grip
- Avoid squeezing an exercise ball in your hands. It puts too much stress on the joints

Avoid holding one position too long and doing the same movement over and over

- Change positions often and pace yourself through the activity
- Use a book holder rather than holding a book or magazine
- Try a trackball instead of a computer mouse

Use equipment

Choose a tool that has:

- **LEVERAGE** – less effort is needed to turn an object if the lever arm is long, e.g. tap turner, key extensions, jar openers
- **PADDED HANDLES** – large handles give you a secure hold without a tight grasp
- **FRICTION** – a non slippery surface is easier to grip and takes less effort, e.g. non skid material under a bowl or used to open a jar or turn a doorknob
- **LONG HANDLES** – long handles extend your reach, e.g. a reacher to get items from the floor or a high shelf, or a long handled comb to use when your shoulders hurt

Use Splints

Splints help lower pain by holding your joints in a good position. They can be used when you are doing activities or when you are resting.



Use hot and cold for pain and swelling

- ICE is useful for pain and swelling in joints. Do not use ice if you have circulation problems like Raynauds in your hands. Wrap an ice pack or frozen food bag in a cold damp towel and place it on the joint.
- HEAT is useful for pain and stiffness in your joints, but do not use if your joint is swollen, hot or red
- You can use both heat and ice in CONTRAST BATHS. Soak hands in cold water for 60 seconds, then hot water for 30 seconds. Repeat 3 to 4 times.
- Ice and or heat can be used 4 to 5 times a day, for 10 minutes each time.
- Do not use heat or ice if you have numbness or tingling in your hands. Talk to your therapist or doctor.

Time your activities with your medications

You may find you have good relief at some time after you take your medications. Plan your hardest activities for the time you know you will feel your best.

Do range of motion exercises

- Exercises will help keep movement and strength in your arms and hands and help lower pain and stiffness.
- Fit your exercises into your normal routine and try to do them at the same time each day. Do them while watching TV, listening to music, etc.

KEY MESSAGES

- Use two hands
- Use friction, leverage and larger grips
- Plan ahead and pace your activity
- Change positions and take breaks
- Use heat and ice