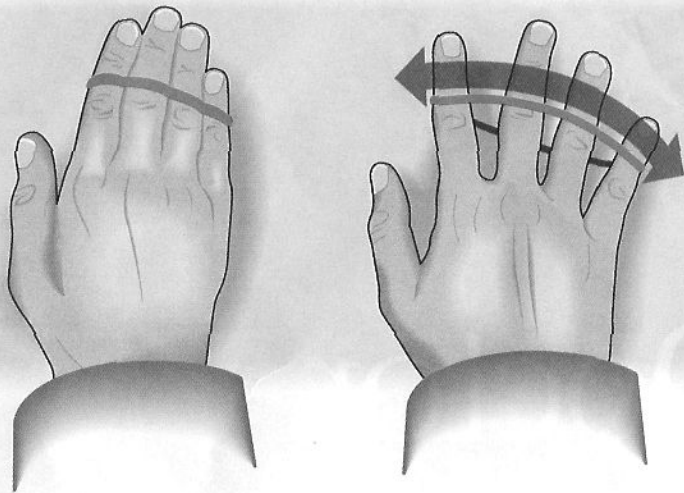


Exercises for osteoarthritis of the hand

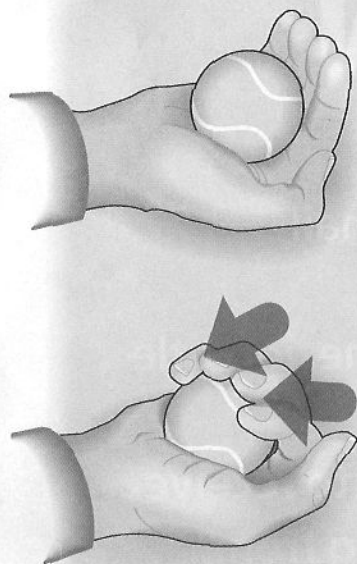
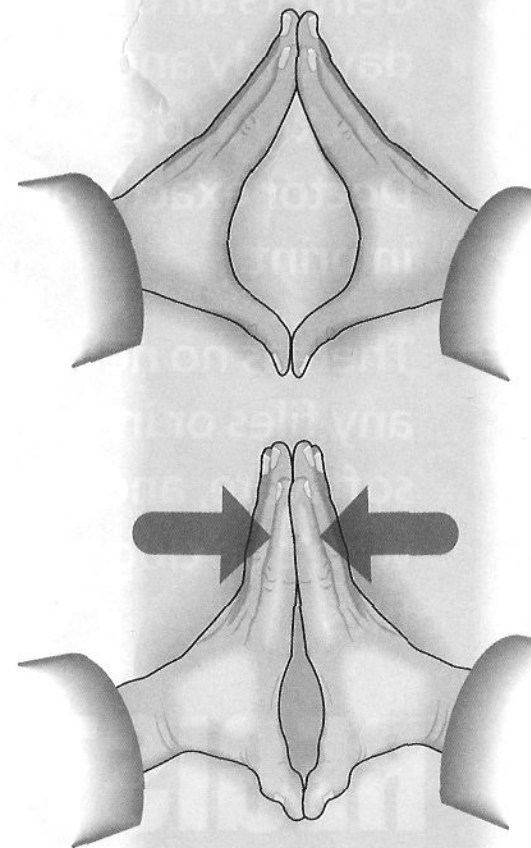


▲ Hand-muscle stretch

Wrap a wide rubber band around your fingers. Spread the fingers apart. Hold for five seconds. Relax. Repeat eight times, working up to 12 times if you are able. This exercise should not be done when you have an acute flare-up of osteoarthritis in your hand.

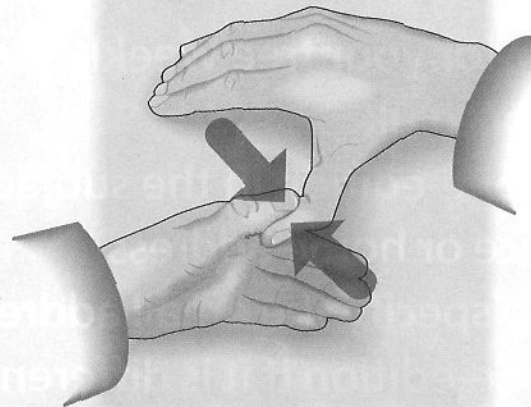
▶ Web-space strengthener

Place both hands together in a steeple shape, thumb to thumb and fingertips to fingertips. Try to press the palms together. You should feel a stretch in the web space between the thumb and index finger, and between the other fingers. Hold for five seconds. Relax. Repeat five or six times. This exercise can be done even when you have some swelling in your hands.



◀ Tennis ball squeeze

Hold a tennis ball in your hand. Squeeze it with a steady pressure, holding as you count to four or five, and releasing as you count to two. Relax. Repeat four or five times. The reason for the controlled release is to allow blood to move back into the hand, which is a slower process as we age. This exercise can be done even if there is some swelling in your hands.



◀ Thumb-muscle strengthener

Rotate your hands so the thumbs are facing each other, upside-down. Press the thumb of one hand against the thumb of the other hand. Hold for five seconds. Relax. Repeat eight to ten times daily to maintain the strength of the thumb muscles. This exercise can be done even if you have some swelling in your hands.