

Joint protection and hand exercises

Rheumatoid arthritis



How to use this sheet. Do the exercises slowly. Stop before the pain builds — mild discomfort is fine, sharp pain is not. A little every day beats a lot once a week.

1 Warm water soak



Rest both hands in a bowl of warm water. Open and close a loose fist slowly while they are in the water.

5 minutes**Before the exercises****✓ Should feel**

The hands loosening as they warm

X Should not feel

Water hot enough to sting or redden the skin

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Move the fingers through the positions slowly to keep them mobile.

10 times

3 times a day

✓ **Should feel**

The fingers moving freely

✗ **Should not feel**

Pain that lasts hours afterwards



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3

Table-top hand stretch



Rest the hand flat and gently straighten the fingers.

Hold 10 seconds

10 times

✓ **Should feel**

A gentle stretch

✗ **Should not feel**

Forcing a stiff joint



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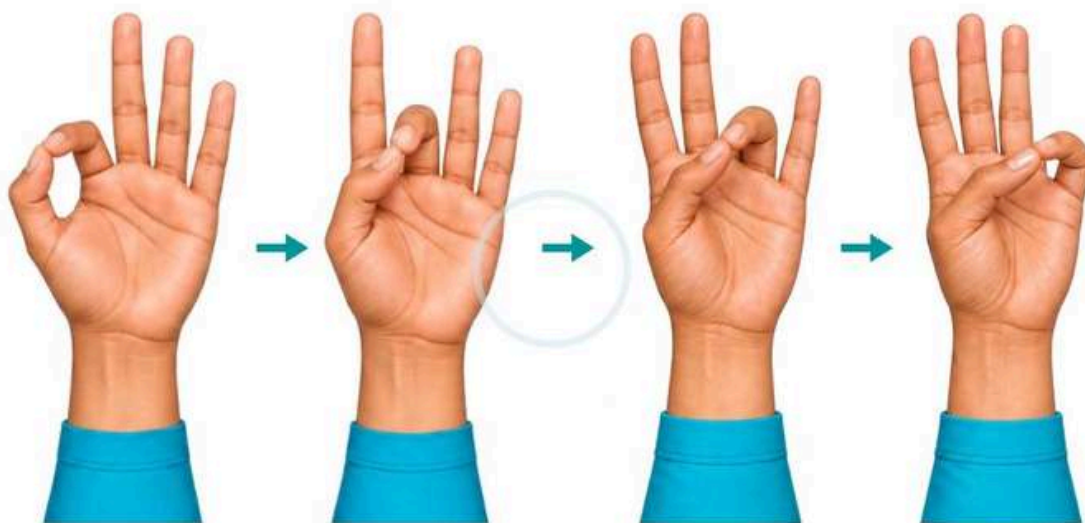
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4

Finger to thumb touches



Touch each fingertip to the thumb.

10 rounds

Daily

✓ **Should feel**

Control

✗ **Should not feel**

Pinching pain



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5

Wrist circles



Slow, gentle circles.

10 each way

Daily

✓ **Should feel**
Free movement

✗ **Should not feel**
Pain



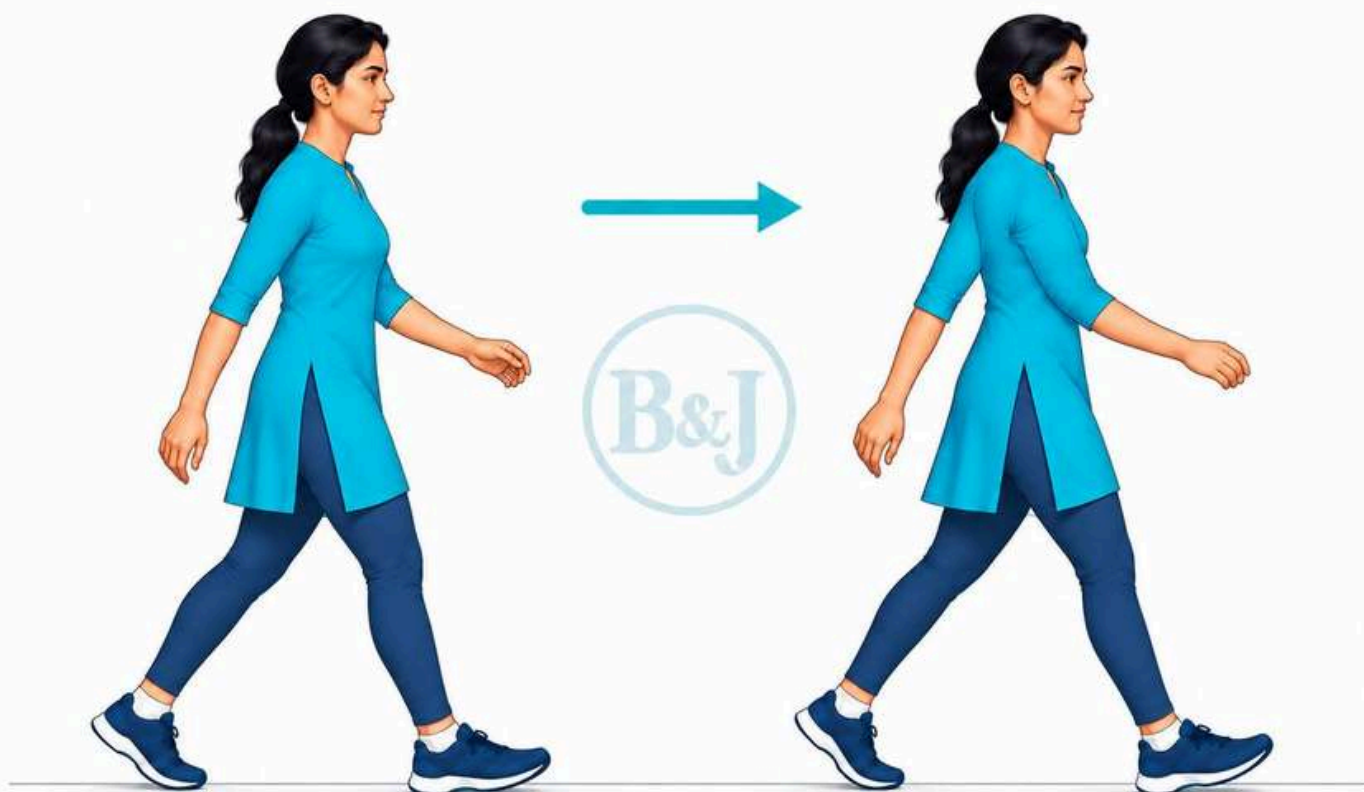
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Gentle regular exercise helps the whole body.

20 minutes

Most days

✓ **Should feel**

Easier movement

✗ **Should not feel**

Exercising through a flare

Stop and telephone us if

- The pain is getting worse, not better, after two weeks
- You get new numbness, tingling or weakness
- The joint swells up or locks
- You feel unwell or feverish



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