

SUMMER 2018

### How can you prevent hand and wrist pain?

#### Ergonomics

A properly positioned workstation including your desk, home work station, kitchen, etc. can be helpful in preventing hand and wrist discomfort.

John Indalecio explains, “**Texting holding your phone with one hand and touching the screen with the other index finger will spare your thumbs from grasping. Proper ergonomics will prevent stress and compression along nerve routes.**”



Check with your doctor before embarking on any new exercise program.

Find Hospital for Special Surgery on the web at [hss.edu](http://hss.edu)

## Handle Your Hand Care



### What causes hand and wrist pain?

We use our hands to communicate with the world. However, we rarely realize how much we rely on our hands until something goes wrong. Hand and wrist complications can be the result of common conditions like:

- **Hand nerve entrapment**, including carpal tunnel syndrome and cubital tunnel syndrome, occurs when one of the major nerves to the hand is compressed causing pain, numbness and tingling in the hand or arm.
- **Dupuytren's contracture** is when the tissue underneath the skin thickens and tightens causing the fingers to be pulled inwards.
- **Trigger finger** (or Stenosing tenosynovitis) occurs when part of the tendon sheath in the finger becomes inflamed causing pain, stiffness and locking when you bend or straighten the finger.
- **DeQuervain's tendonitis**, the most common form of tendonitis in the wrist, is characterized by inflammation of the tendons on the thumb side of the wrist and causing pain while grasping or making a fist.
- **Osteoarthritis** is a common source of hand pain which results from the loss of cartilage cushion between joints.

**These conditions can result from a direct injury, repetitive use from hobbies, exercise or workplace tasks, or other inflammatory conditions like rheumatoid arthritis.**

### What are the symptoms?

- Numbness or tingling
- Pain
- Reduced range of motion
- Swelling

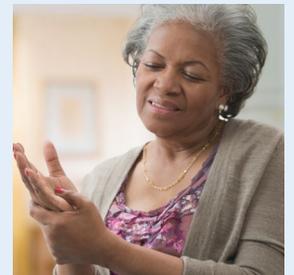
Hand or wrist symptoms may be exacerbated by activities like bicycling or yoga that require pressure directly on the wrist. Additionally, texting, typing or certain sleeping positions can irritate joints in the hand and wrist.

**“Try to refrain from diagnosing yourself; instead list your symptoms and tell your healthcare provider when the symptoms occur and their duration, severity and quality.”**

—John Indalecio, OTR/L, CHT, MS,  
Hand Therapist at HSS

### What are the treatment options?

**Treatment options may vary according to the diagnosis but many physicians will use non-operative treatment options first.**



#### Physical Therapy

Gentle stretching and exercise might help decrease stiffness, build strength and restore normal range of motion and function. A physical therapist may recommend the use of splints or braces, special devices to help with normal daily activities, and exercises to regain strength and promote normal function.

**Oral Medications** Over-the-counter or prescription anti-inflammatory medications may help to reduce pain with certain conditions.

**Injections** Cortisone injections may be used to treat some conditions like carpal tunnel, trigger finger, arthritis and tendonitis.

**Surgery** Depending on the type and severity of the condition, conservative treatment options may not always alleviate symptoms. Consult an orthopedic surgeon to see if surgery might be an appropriate treatment option.