Keeping Your Fingers Limber Despite Arthritis

by AMY MANLEY

Rheumatoid Arthritis in Fingers and Hands

One of the biggest complaints among RA patients is the negative effect this condition has on the fingers and hands. It’s a double edged sword, as exercising this area can cause a great deal of pain when done without the right education, but without the proper exercises, pain and stiffness gets worse.

Your hands are one of the most important parts of your body, and losing the ability to use them makes everyday tasks — like wearing jewelry — a challenge and can cause feelings of depression as well. Learn how to keep your fingers and hands limber and maintain your quality of life.

Get the Right Treatment

Treating your RA properly is the first step to success. With the right treatment, you’re able to prevent progression and flare-ups, and can reduce a lot of the pain associated with RA. Without the right treatment, you’re going to keep your hands and fingers idle more often, which will cause them to flexibility rather quickly.

There’s a variety of treatment methods available to help reduce your symptoms and therefore make things easier to do with your hands. Treatment methods available include topical ointments, heat treatments, and oral medication. Your doctor will work with you to determine the best treatment methods available based on your individual case.

Quick Exercises

You may think keeping your hands still is best, because it causes less pain, but this couldn’t be further than the truth; it's important for you to keep your hands moving. These great hand exercises will stretch our your muscles and keep your hands limber, and they can be done pretty much anywhere.

- **Roll your hand into a fist –** Making a fist helps stretch both your hands and your fingers, which only putting a small amount of pressure on the joints. You want to keep the fist for 10 seconds, for the best results.
- **Type on a computer –** Many people with RA avoiding typing altogether because it can be painful. While it may be uncomfortable, it’s one of the best exercises for your hands and fingers to keep them limber. While you don’t want to spend hours on the computer, once you have your pain levels under control, typing even just a few sentences offers a wide range of benefits.

Maintain Hobbies

Maintaining your hobbies – or picking up new ones – is a great way to provide your hands with the exercise they need to stay limber. The following hobbies can help keep your fingers and hands limber, while also improving your mood.

- **Master the rubix cube –** This game keeps your hands and fingers moving, while also providing mental stimulation. And you’re not limited to the cube alone. Similar mind and hand activities will keep your hands and fingers limber, and can be quite enjoyable.
- **Play with playdough –** This isn’t just fun for kids, but people of all ages. It’s soft enough to mold, but hard enough to exercise your fingers and hands. You can simply roll and stretch the playdough, or even create simple sculptures.
- **Knit and crochet –** Knitting and crocheting is a great way to keep your hands and fingers from getting stiff, as well as reducing stress. If you avoid projects with tight stitches and don't overdo it, knitting can help relieve those aches in your hands.

Don’t let your RA keep you from enjoying your life to the fullest. You should do one of these activities each day of the week to keep your hands and fingers limber, and your quality of life at its best.