

Hand Exercises To Help You Maintain Your Dexterity & Flexibility

Every day, we use our hands for everything, including cooking, texting, writing, picking up items, playing sports, playing musical instruments, and many more. In addition, you will also gain more pressing force in your hands and forearms; this is a decisive force when you will carry challenging weights.

The human hand contains 27 bones; hence it is considered one of the most complex body parts. Consequently, keeping the palms healthy can be challenging since they are prone to injury.

Too much pressure on your hand can result in carpal tunnel syndrome — extreme pain, stiffness, weakness, and numbness in fingers and hands. The base of the human hand is where the carpal tunnel is located, a narrow passage of ligament. It has a median nerve — the nerve line that starts from the forearm to the palm. The median nerve is liable for the fingers to move.

Many other various types of hand pain originate in different parts of the skeletal structure — bones, tendons, connective tissues, nerves, and joints that can cause arthritis, gout, ganglion cysts, lupus, and others.

The daily practice of physical exercises is highly recommended and encouraged by physicists. Its benefits are proven by science, which also points to the hands as one of the most critical areas of the body; after all, they are the essence of doing. Many experts consider them as critical as the brain.

As they said, prevention is always better than cure; hence, to maintain hand flexibility and agility, one should do various types of exercises. Here are 14 hand exercises that will help you to maintain dexterity and flexibility:

1. Squeeze Ball Exercise

Get a softball, hold it with a bit of grip in your palm and slowly try to squeeze it. Hold the position for five seconds, tweak it a little hard, but be careful; it shouldn't cause your hands pain. Release the pressure after 5 seconds, and then repeat it at least ten times for each hand.

Continue the squeeze ball exercise at least three times weekly; it will improve the hand's flexibility and the ability to hold things for longer.

Note: Squeeze ball exercise might not suit arthritis patients; please check with the physician before practicing.

2. Fist Exercise

The fist exercise is one of the most effective ways to increase the hand's range of motion. Wrap the thumb across the fingers and make a fist. Hold for 30 to 40 seconds and slowly spread the fingers as wide as possible. Repeat the process with both hands four to five times a day.

3. Finger Lifting

Lay your right hand flat on the table with your palm down. Start with your thumb, slowly lift each finger off the table, hold for five seconds, and lower it. Repeat the process with each finger eight to ten times. Continue to do the same exercise with your left hand. Finger lifting exercise helps increase the hand's range of motion and maintain the flexibility of the fingers.

4. Claw Stretch

Hold the hands with the palm facing forward. Slowly bend the fingertips, and they should touch your hand. The shape of the fingers in this exercise looks like a claw. Hold the position for 30 to 40 seconds and release. Repeat the process four to five times for each hand.

5. Finger Stretch

There are two types of finger stretch exercises:

- a. Put your hand on a flat surface with your palm down. Slowly straighten the fingers without applying any force on the joints. Hold the position for 30 to 40 seconds and release it. Repeat the exercise four to five-time with both hands.

b. Get a finger stretcher. Put the fingers on each oval. Start the exercise by keeping the fingers together and slowly opening the hands as much as possible without hurting the joints. Repeat the process four to five times.

6. Pinch Strengthenener

Pinch strengthening is another excellent exercise that promotes muscle flexibility and enables you to work on challenging things such as opening up the heavy doors, lifting garage doors, operating gas pumps, and many other things without feeling pain in your hand.

Get a foam ball (the softest one). Hold it in your palm and press it slowly with all your fingers. Hold the position for 30 to 40 seconds. Repeat the process at least ten times with each hand.

Note: This exercise is not suitable for people suffering from joint pain. Please consult your practitioner before performing this exercise.

7. Grip Strengthenener

Get a grip strengthener. Place the handle on your palm at about a 45-degree angle. The right handle should be placed above your thumb, and the other should be placed as low as possible on the top hand. Keep the fingers as close as possible. Squeeze the grip slowly with the last finger. Hold the position for 30 seconds and release it. Repeat the process three to four times.

8. Thumb Extension Using Rubber Band

Get a rubber band, a strong, stretchy one. Wrap the rubber band around your hand a little lower the thumb area (preferable 1 inch from the thumb joint). Keep your hand on the table and slowly move the thumb away from the fingers. Hold the position for 30 to 40 seconds and slowly move the thumb back to touch the fingers. Repeat the process at least ten times with both hands.

9. Thumb Flex

Thumb flex exercise helps you in increasing the thumb's range of motion.

Straighten your hand and extend all the fingers as far as you can. Then bend the thumb across the palm till it touches the last finger base. Hold the position for 30 to 40 seconds. Repeat the exercise four to five times with both thumbs.

10. Thumb Touch

Thumb touch exercise helps increase the range of motion of your fingers, especially your thumbs. It allows you to hold a pen, spoon, fork, pick up books, etc.

Hold the hand straight, palm facing towards your face. Slowly touch the thumb to your fingertips, making a shape of the letter O. One finger at a time. Hold the position for 30 to 40 seconds and release it. Repeat the exercise with both of your hands four to five times.

11. Wrists Stretching

Extend your left arm to the front. Bend your wrist so that it faces the floor. Then, slowly, bend the left wrist towards the upside with your right hand while stretching your arm. Hold on to this position for 15 to 20 seconds, and then switch the arms. Repeat the process two to three times a day.

12. Play With Clay

Playing with clay is one of the underrated forms of exercise for improving hand flexibility. Playing with clay is generally introduced to children as it is considered a simple tool to help them increase their fingers and strengthen hand flexibility. You can squeeze the clay, pinch it, roll it between hands and fingers, or flatten it; it is a resistive exercise.

13. Dough Kneading

Like playing with clay, dough kneading also helps strengthen the hand's flexibility as one needs to knead it for a little longer to make a perfect batch for bread. In addition, it increases muscle strength and relaxes the joints.

Golden tips to maximizing the hand exercises result for a longer time:

The new habits of modern life tend to harm the healthy maintenance of hands. We live in a sedentary society that is slowly valuing physical exercise.

As with any workout routine, elements such as preparation, commonly called a warm-up, are highly recommended, and they are also not left out of the hand exercise routine.

Warm-ups help improve workouts; they precede the most intense and strenuous exercises. These are small movements that prepare the muscles for heavier training.

Warm-ups like massages on the fingers, palms of the hands, and intercessions relax the muscles, stimulate blood circulation, prevent pain or cramps, and improve resistance, optimizing the results of the hand workout. In addition to massages, warm-ups such as stretching, touching, light lifting, or slight pressure also contribute to more effective training.

Do not exclude elastic bands to prepare your fingers; you can squeeze balls or other soft things to warm up your hand. Other things like good hydration and creating healthy habits in everyday life can also help facilitate hand exercises, maximizing results.

Final Thoughts

Your hands are unique parts of your body and also your natural tools; it is essential and beneficial to keep them in shape to avoid inflammation, irritation, or even conditions like tendonitis and arthritis, not to mention carpal tunnel syndrome.

The discomfort caused by hand stiffness can cause serious discomfort. We tend to avoid hand pain due to overload work, which is one of the causes of major joint pain or arthritis. It is a good time to start hand exercises daily for five to ten minutes. Consult with a physician if you feel discomfort while exercising or working. Delaying on consultation may harm the hand's tissues.