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Complex made Simple...clinically relevant education

July 2020 ClinicalPearls No. 63

A SIMPLE HOME PROGRAM FOR AN UNCOMPLICATED DISTAL RADIUS FRACTURE

REMINDERS:

- Do not push yourself to the point that you have pain.
- Perform only the exercises your therapist has assigned; repeat as many times as instructed.
- Contact your therapist if you have any questions.

MAKE A WRIST WARMER

To prepare for your exercise session:

- Fill a long sock ¾ full of uncooked rice.
- Tie a knot in the end of the sock to hold the rice inside.
- Heat the sock in the microwave for 30 seconds at a time. **WARNING:** monitor that the rice does not get too hot!
- Place a towel or pillowcase between the sock and your skin; wrap the sock around your wrist and enjoy the warmth for 15 minutes.



Exercise 1: WRIST FLEXION & EXTENSION (up & down)



YOU WILL NEED: Round objects on which you can comfortably rest your wrist and hand: oatmeal container, large Mason jar, large peanut butter jar, or two-liter bottle.





HOW TO PERFORM:

1. Begin with your wrist and hand resting comfortably on the container.
2. Stretch your wrist down by rolling the container forward away from you.
3. Stretch your wrist back by rolling the container backward toward you.



HOW TO PROGRESS:

1. Using the large round object, push your wrist with your other hand to stretch in both directions.
2. "Wash the wall" keeping your hand flat on the wall and making the largest circle possible.

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(continued)

Exercise 2: WRIST RADIAL & ULNAR DEVIATION (side-to-side)

YOU WILL NEED: Any object you can hold like a dart: Pen, pencil, chopstick, small wooden dowel.



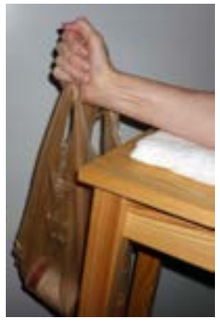


HOW TO PERFORM:

1. Rest your wrist comfortably on a rolled towel at the edge of a table with the little finger side on the table and your thumb up.
2. Hold the object between your thumb, index, and middle fingers.
3. Drop your wrist down (as if throwing a dart) and then back up: go as far as you can.

HOW TO PROGRESS:

In the same position, use a bag with handles, filled with can goods; lower and lift for a weighted stretch, adding small cans as it gets easier.



Exercise 3: FOREARM ROTATION

YOU WILL NEED: An object you can hold with a small amount of weight at the end: Wooden spoon, hairbrush, paint brush, hammer, or mallet.

HOW TO PERFORM:

1. Hold your arm at your side with your elbow bent at 90 degrees.
2. Grasp the handle of the object and turn so your palm is up and the object is horizonal; be sure and keep your elbow at your side.
3. Turn so your palm is down and the object is again horizonal and elbow is at your side.







HOW TO PROGRESS:

1. If the end is too heavy, start with your hand closer to the end and work to hold it further away.
2. Choose objects that have more weight at the end such as a small hammer or mallet, or tape small weighted objects at one end of the spoon.





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(continued)

Exercise 4: FINGER FLEXION AND EXTENSION (opening & closing)

YOU WILL NEED: Scarf or towel to grasp

HOW TO PERFORM:

1. Place the scarf/towel on a tabletop.
2. Stretch your fingers out straight on the scarf/towel.
3. Gather the scarf/towel together, making a fist as you squeeze the scarf/towel.







HOW TO PROGRESS:

Wring out a towel or washcloth, twisting in both directions.

Exercise 5: COORDINATION

YOU WILL NEED: Small objects you can hold in your hand: Cotton balls, shells, and golf balls, etc.

HOW TO PERFORM:

- Move small objects around in the palm of your hand.

HOW TO PROGRESS:

1. Place a small ball in a shallow container.
2. Swirl the ball around in the container while holding the container with your palm up.
3. Keep your elbow at your side.







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