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Looking After Your Joints: Joint Protection for Hand Osteoarthritis and Hand Pain



Joint Protection

Workbook

**LOOKING AFTER YOUR JOINTS:
JOINT PROTECTION
FOR HAND OSTEOARTHRITIS AND HAND PAIN**



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Action Plans and Exercise Diaries in Appendix 3 may be reproduced for individuals to help make changes.

Further copies of this workbook are available from the Principal Investigator Professor Krysia Dziedzic and Professor Alison Hammond co-investigator and programme developer.

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WELCOME!

This programme is for people with hand osteoarthritis (OA) and **hand pain**.

The programme helps you make changes in your daily life. It helps you to manage your hand OA and hand pain, and to take an active role in your own health care.

There are 4 meetings of about 1 hour each. Each workshop is a mix of short talks, practical tasks and discussions. We have a go at practical ways of helping you to manage your hand OA and hand pain. You can meet others with similar hand problems, swap practical ideas and tips and learn from each other. **The meetings are fun!** People say they really enjoy them and time flies by. We look forward to seeing you!

Looking after Your Joints

We focus on:

- What is hand OA
- Reducing strain on joints and
- Helping you do what you want to do in life.

We discuss what hand pain and hand OA are and give you new information about strategies to help self-manage these.

- Joint Protection helps reduce strain on joints in everyday activities. It reduces pain, stiffness and the likelihood of joints changing out of shape (deformities), or these getting worse if you already have some.

This workbook suggests practical changes in your life and further reading with more ideas and information.

Research in arthritis shows those people who make as many of the recommended changes as possible have less pain, joint stiffness and better ability to do everyday activities.

We hope you enjoy it – it's up to you to make the most of it!

PURPOSE OF THIS WORKBOOK

Read the workbook and information pack in the days following each meeting. This helps you to remember key points discussed and new methods we try. The weekly home programmes, which you decide on, help you to put what you learn into practice. The more time you are able to put into doing your home programme now, the quicker the changes will be and the more benefits you will gain.

By following the programme and completing the workbook you will:

- Have a clearer understanding of your hand problem.
- Be more aware of how your everyday activities and movements can add to joint strain and frustration.
- Be able to use Joint Protection methods.
- Be able to analyse your movements and activities. Learn to problem solve practical solutions which reduce pain and frustration during everyday activities.
- Change activities and movements to help reduce strain, pain and stiffness, and the possibility of deformities developing.

The programme and workbook help you gradually learn new skills over the 4 weeks of the programme and beyond. People with arthritis find this programme very helpful and much does seem “common sense.” Usually people make many of these changes over the years themselves by learning through “trial and error”. Making these changes sooner may help **prevent problems** – limiting any longer-term problems arthritis may bring. Making these changes as soon as possible gives you a “short cut”.

We know people who make these changes have:

- Less pain
- Less stiffness
- Less frustration
- And can do everyday tasks more easily.

But YOU need to make these changes **OFTEN ENOUGH** for them to work. Use them all the time, not just when in pain. Don’t think “I’ll do that later, I’m not that bad yet.” Lifestyle Management is preventative. The sooner and the more you use these methods, the greater the chance you can influence the course of your hand OA in future. Lifestyle Management is not a cure but it does keep you more active and independent.

Learning these ideas is easy – but you are trying to change the habits and routines of a lifetime.

YOUR DAILY HABITS AND ROUTINES DEVELOPED SLOWLY AND SO ARE CHANGED SLOWLY.

We will take a step-by-step approach to helping you make changes.

Feel free to ask any questions you want to during the programme and we will try our best to help. Your ideas are welcome. If you have found an easy way to do something please share it with your group and pass on the idea to the group leader who can then show others in future.

USING THIS WORKBOOK

The main points from each meeting are here in this workbook.

- After each meeting, please **do read through the notes for that session.**
- Use the ideas and principles to make further changes.
- At the end of each meeting's notes is the "Home Programme." This helps you plan what changes you want to make each week and in the future. It helps you check your progress in changing.

Please keep the workbook as a resource for the future. Read it again in a few months. See how many changes you have made!

CONTENTS:

Meeting 1: Pages 8-23

What is Osteoarthritis? How does it affect hands? Self-help and Lifestyle Management. Why make changes?Getting started with Joint Protection.

Meeting 2: Pages 24-35

Joint Protection, Changing Habits and Routines.

Meeting 3: Pages 36-51

Task Analysis, Joint Protection Practice, Making Changes: Goal-setting and Action Plans.

Meeting 4: Pages 52-59

Revisiting the 6 P's: Pain, Protection, Planning, Pacing, Positioning and Problem Solving. Review of Joint Protection. Continuing Making Changes.

Appendix 1: Pages 60-63

Other Information Sources

Appendix 2: Pages 64-69

Extra Action Plans

MEETING 1:
What is hand OA and hand pain?
Why make changes?
Making a start.....

MEETING 1: What is Hand OA? Why make changes? Making a start...

Osteoarthritis (OA) is a condition causing joint pain. It can lead to difficulties doing everyday activities and can affect your quality of life.

- OA is the commonest form of arthritis in the UK.
- It is one of the leading causes of pain and disability worldwide.
- OA is **not** caused by ageing.
- It does **not** necessarily get worse.
- OA is slow to develop. It can change the structure of joints.
- Joints can be still be symptom-free despite OA.

Recommended reading:

Read the Arthritis Research UK booklet “Osteoarthritis”

- Particularly sections on how joints are affected (pages 2-7) and hand OA (page 9-10)

OA most often affects hands. OA in your hands affects the joint and surrounding tissues (eg the joint capsule, ligaments). It may cause pain, stiffness and limited movement. Occasionally, joints get inflamed (that is red, swollen and more painful). How bad symptoms are varies a lot. Pain and other symptoms often flare up and settle back down again.

Young people as well as older people have OA. It may occur in more than one joint at a time. The hips, knees and the lower part of the spine are also often affected. Shoulders, elbows, wrists and feet can be affected too, but this is less common.

Many people think OA is just part of getting older. They think OA always gets worse and can't be treated.

- OA does **not** always get worse as you get older.
- There **are** treatments available and changes to your lifestyle that you can make to help ease the pain and symptoms.

The Arthritis Research UK booklet explains about the process of OA. It can be caused by a number of factors. OA is actually a repair process. Cartilage may be lost and bone may change shape. If the repair process is successful, the joint may change in shape and structure but is symptom-free.

Additional information:

The NICE guideline (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence) **for Osteoarthritis** summarises the treatment, advice and support that people who have OA should be offered. The website is in appendix 1 on page 64.

Once changes to the support structures of joints (capsules, ligaments and muscle weakening) occur, then aches and pains, damage and strain are much more likely. The movements you make when doing everyday activities (like cooking, housework, gardening, work) may contribute to this being worse. This may, in time, lead to some deformities developing in joints.

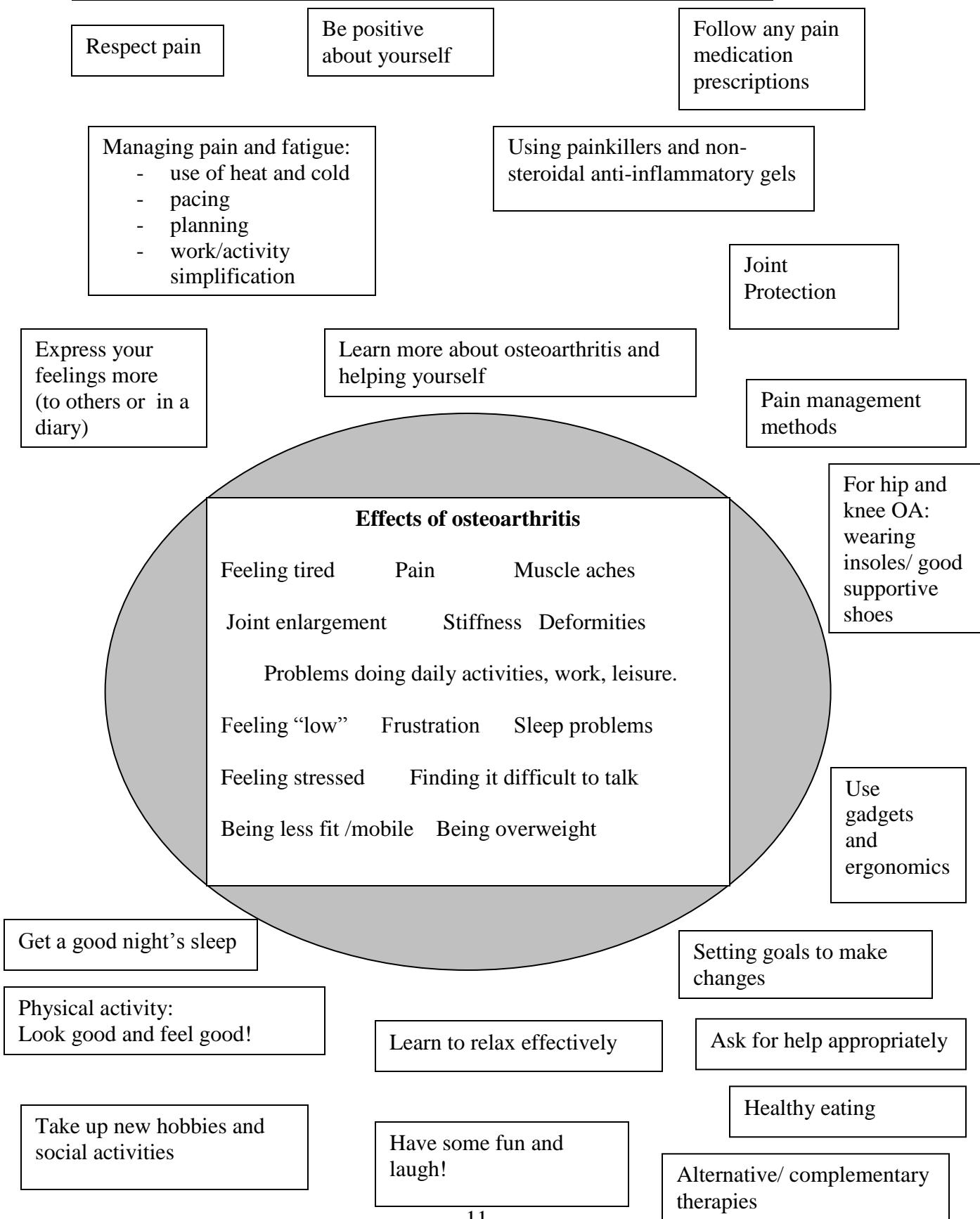
The effects of OA and what you can do

There are many different possible effects of OA. They can all interact to make each problem worse. See chart 1 overleaf. There are lots of lifestyle management strategies to help reduce these. Using a wide range of these means you are more likely to live successfully with your OA and reduce long-term problems.

Re-read arc booklet “Osteoarthritis” pages 16-21.

- particularly about “**what I can do to help myself**”

Chart 1: MANAGING HAND JOINT PAIN AND OA SUCCESSFULLY



Why make changes?

Joint Protection helps you do everyday activities with less pain. You will need to make changes in your lifestyle to do these. Ask yourself: **is it worth it for you to use them?** It can help you to think about WHY it could be useful to use these in your daily life. How we spend our days helps give us meaning and enjoyment to life. Sometimes we do things because we have to. But we also need a balance of things we want to do, enjoy doing, and get satisfaction out of as well. Joint pain and OA can upset that balance. Think about: **what things are important for you to do in life?** Do you have any problems doing them because of your hand problems?

Are the following important for you to be able to do? (Tick)

	Yes	No	If yes – any hand problems?
Spend time in the garden?			
Go to the cinema or theatre?			
Do activities with my family/ friends?			
Attend sporting events?			
Spend time taking care of / playing with my pet?			
Visiting the library/ bookshop and read books?			
Take part in groups/ social clubs? Go to classes?			
Spend time on hobbies/ DIY/ crafts – doing things with my hands?			
Spend free time doing voluntary work?			
Be involved in physical activities – walking, cycling, swimming, dancing etc?			
Listen to (or play) music?			
Go to social events with family and friends?			
Travel to other parts of the country/ other countries?			
Take care of my family – play with children/ grandchildren?			
Look after the house?			
Shop for myself, family and/or friends?			
Prepare and cook meals?			
Work – either full or part time?			
Other: ?			

Identifying what **activities** can be tricky, means it's easier to work out what and how to change.

- Keep notes during the week about what activities you find tricky to do.
- Build up a list of activities or actions that you could change to reduce pain and strain.

Are any of these making it difficult to do things in life you want to do?

<i>Tick below</i>
Pain
Fatigue / tiredness
Limited mobility / fitness
Stiffness
Difficulty sleeping
Frustration with practical problems
Any other?

There are other reasons too - such as stress, feeling "low," perhaps family and friends not always understanding how OA and joint pain affect you. Many people express:

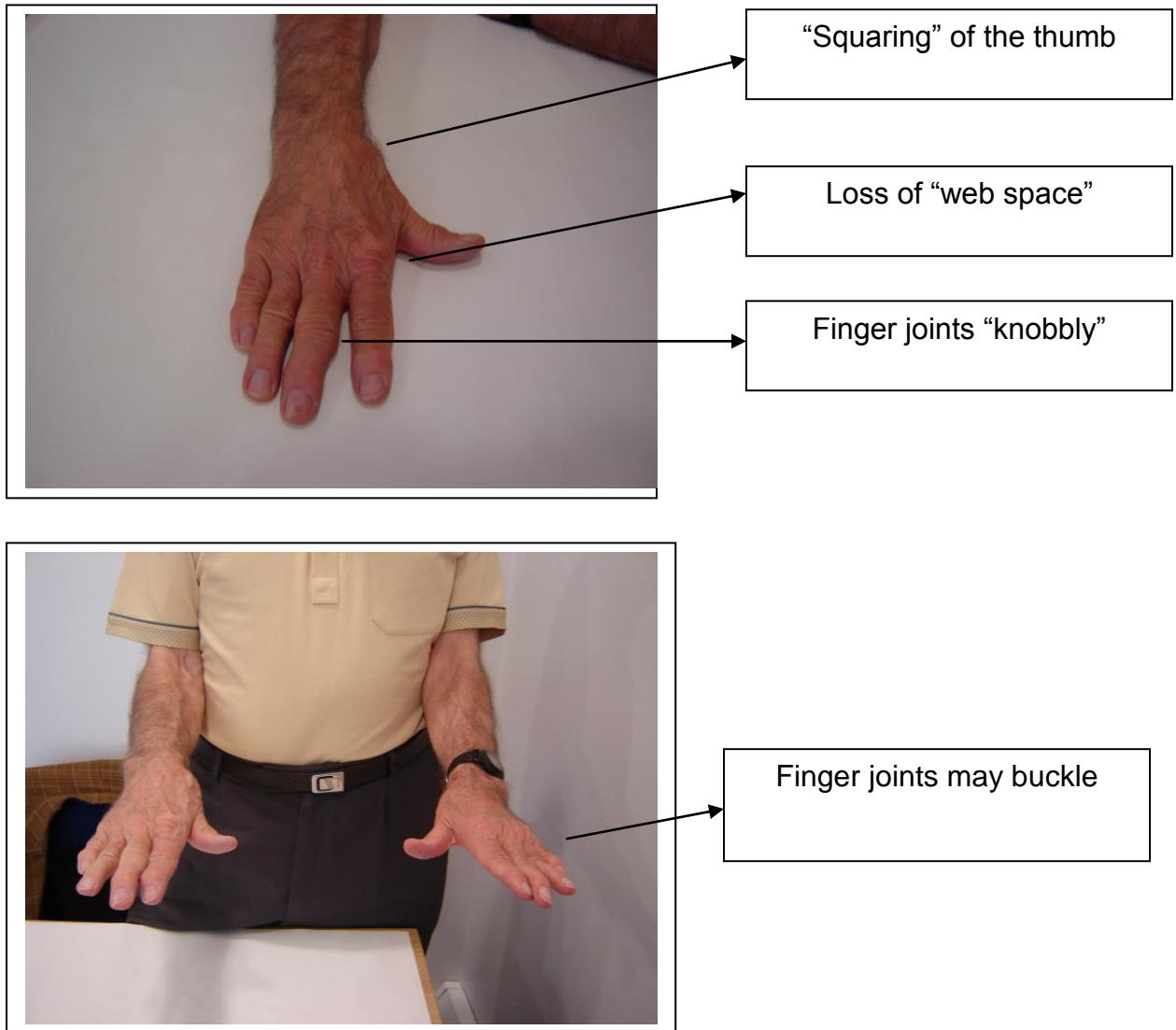
- Feelings of frustration from difficulty doing everyday activities.
- Feeling a sense of loss from not being able to do some of the things they always used to do.
- Feeling "older" and that OA has taken away part of the person they used to be.

We can't tackle everything in this programme that can help – but it helps to talk about how you feel about OA. You might find the programme gives you the opportunity to get support and advice from other people with OA as well. We aim to be positive about what you can – not what you can't do – during the group. Take the time to talk whilst you are here!

Making changes

The commonest joints affected by OA are the hands (fingers and thumbs). This programme particularly looks at avoiding or limiting hand problems, but you can apply the principles learnt to problems with any other joints.

These pictures show some changes people with hand OA can develop:



Reading:

Pages 3-22 in the Arthritis Research UK booklet "Looking After your Joints When You Have Arthritis."

- This includes information about both osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis on pages 8-10 - **just focus on facts about osteoarthritis here.**

This goes over what joint protection is, why do it, why and how deformities, particularly in the hands, develop, and what type of movements you should try to limit and change if possible.

To introduce you to ways of reducing pain, stiffness and limiting deformity, this programme uses the following **Joint Protection** principles. These are important general principles to apply in your daily life:

General principles:

PAIN, PROTECTION, PLANNING, PACING, POSITIONING AND PROBLEM-SOLVING

1. Pain

If your everyday activities cause:

- Pain or aching that doesn't ease off quickly with rest
- Pain/ aching at night

These are warning signs. Sometimes you feel it's better just to "grin and bear" it and push through the pain. For a short time this may be OK. But if you keep doing it, you are just ignoring your body's message that something is not right. Don't ignore it - **change** your way of doing everyday activities to reduce the pain. Take painkillers when you need to as well.

How can I change?

2. Protection

Lifting, pushing, twisting movements all contribute to joint strain. Look at how you use affected joints:

- How could you move them differently to cause less strain?
- What labour saving gadgets would help?

3. Planning

- Could you organise a task more efficiently?
- Could storage areas be more organised at home and work?
- Can you avoid doing certain jobs, use different equipment or methods, do them less often or, if all else fails, get someone else to help?

4. Pacing

- Take "**microbreaks**" – stop for 30 seconds every 5 minutes or so and STRETCH. Once you get into this habit you'll really notice the benefit!
- Regular short, few minute breaks every half-hour or hour: stretching and swapping between tasks to change position.
- Even out heavier and lighter jobs throughout the day and the week.
- Take a 15–30 minute break in the day when you really try to slow down and relax your hands.

These all help to save energy and limit strain.

5. Positioning

- Use a good posture when standing and sitting.
- Try and avoid your neck “poked forward” as you read or work at a table/desk, this could put strain on your arms and hands.
- Avoid staying in one position or doing repeated hand movements for too long – change position regularly and give yourself a short “stretch”.
- Analyse the body positions you use when doing activities. Could you be more efficient?

6. Problem solving

- Analyse problems and activities.
- Identify possible causes of problems.
- Identify a range of possible solutions.
- Try these solutions in turn.
- Decide which works best for you.

Being more aware how you use your joints in everyday activities helps you to identify what movements particularly contribute to pain, aching and deformity and how you can change them.

Knowing how to do things differently is the easy part. Doing them differently is more difficult. You are trying to change the habits and routines of a lifetime. At the same time there are many demands on your time from home, family and work. This programme aims to give you as many ideas as possible as to how to make these changes. We hope that you will contribute the solutions you have already found to others in the group – pass on your experience to others and to us!

It is **making the change** – putting ideas into practice – that is the main aim of these meetings. The home programme helps you make these changes. **It is up to you** to carry out the advice given or the programme can only be of limited benefit.

HOME PROGRAMME – MEETING 1

1. During the week think about how your hand pain / hand OA is affecting you. Look at the lists on pages 12-13. What problems is hand OA causing?
 - Is it worth it for **you** to change?
2. Take some time during the week to be more aware of how you use your hands and arms in everyday activities. For instance, **on at least one day watch your hands as you are making a hot drink.**
 - Are there any actions pushing your hand and wrist joints sideways or downwards, or tight grips, which could be straining your joints?
 - Jot down ideas below...
3. Watch how a relative or friend makes a hot drink. Are there any actions you think you are already doing differently to them? Jot these down below....
4. **Keep a note during the week here** of what activities cause you particular problems. Try to be as specific as possible – don't put for example "housework" but "hoovering", "ironing" and so on.

5. Look through the next few pages of photographs showing everyday tasks. The pictures show strain reducing ways of doing these.
 - Have a go at each task, trying the different methods shown. **Decide which method feels best for you and mark this with a tick.**
6. Choose 4 of these everyday tasks. Practise the method you chose **as often as possible** during the week. If you think you are already doing some or all of these, you may find you are doing so only part of the time, when your joints ache. So try to make a conscious effort to use them all the time.
7. Read the recommended reading from the Arthritis Research UK booklets “Osteoarthritis” and “Looking After Your Joints”.

Appendix 1 lists other books and websites you may like to look at during the programme or in future.

JOINT CARE METHODS 1

Remember to try each method and choose which is best for you – tick the small box for the method you prefer.

1. Turning taps



BETTER: Use palm/ heel of hand, not fingers to turn.



BEST: Use two hands, gripping between palms.



BEST: Use a tap aid – there are various types, try different ones to suit you/ your taps. Or long-term, change to a lever tap if you can.



TICK HERE: for each time you practised this week..

JOINT CARE METHODS 1

Remember to try each method and choose which is best for you – tick the small box for the method you prefer.

2. Opening and closing a jar



BETTER: Use palm/ heel of hand, not fingers to turn. (Put a non-slip mat underneath the jar to stop slipping).



BETTER: Grip side of lid with thumb, palm and fingers. (DO NOT loosen or tighten with fingers only).



BEST: Use a jar aid – there are various types, try different ones to suit you.

TICK HERE: for each time you practised this week..

JOINT CARE METHODS 1

3. Carrying a plate



BEST: Two hands squarely supporting plate/s on palms.



TICK HERE: for each time you practised this week..

4. Carrying a mug



BEST: One hand holding handle (all fingers through if possible), other palm squarely beneath supporting. (Use a saucer under mug/cup if too hot).



TICK HERE: for each time you practised this week..

JOINT CARE METHODS 1

5. Opening tins



BETTER: Use a hand held electric can opener



BEST: Use a table top electric can opener.



BEST: Use a Culinare "One Touch" can opener. This is lightweight and battery operated. Once located on can and switched on, it works automatically.



TICK HERE: for each time you practised this week..

JOINT CARE METHODS 1

6. Carrying a pan



BETTER: Two hands firmly gripping handle.



BEST: One hand firmly gripping handle, other palm/forearm supporting squarely underneath (use a cloth if pan hot).



BEST: Use ladle to pour (avoid need to lift), or put vegetables in a chip basket – lift out and drain all in one.



TICK here for each time you practise this week...

MEETING 2:

Joint Protection, Changing Habits

MEETING 2: Joint Protection, Changing Habits.

In the first meeting, we looked at how some movements in everyday tasks contribute to joint strain, pain and maybe deformities developing. Examples were pushing fingers and thumb sideways; strong grips as you turn taps, open jars, lift a pan or kettle.

- In themselves, one movement done once, in the usual way might be painful but does not cause damage. Doing these movements many times, over time, may do so.

Your aim is to change as **many** movements as possible **all the time**. Not just some movements, some of the time. This way you gain the most benefit from Joint Protection. Joint Protection is not about giving up doing activities (unless there is no alternative). You need to use joints or they stiffen up and muscles weaken. Instead **DO THINGS DIFFERENTLY**.

General guidelines for Joint Protection:

Remember to **respect pain** - and modify your activities:

1. Distribute the weight of what you lift over several joints, for example spread the load between two hands.
2. Avoid putting strain on the thumb and repetitive thumb movements.
3. Avoid prolonged grips in one position.
4. Use as large a grip as possible.
5. Reduce the effort needed to do a task:
 - Use a labour saving gadget, or different design of equipment
 - Avoid lifting heavy objects - find another way to move or slide instead
 - Reduce the weight of what you lift

Recommended reading:

- The Arthritis Research UK booklet “Looking After Your Joints...” (pages 10-22)
- These other Arthritis Research UK and Arthritis Care booklets/leaflets have practical ideas and tips. Read these over the next few weeks and see if any help:
 - Gardening and Arthritis (Arthritis Research UK)
 - Working with Arthritis; Independent Living with Arthritis (Arthritis Care)

When do I need to change hand movements or activities?

You need to change these when you feel;

- pain or aching from the activity at the time or later
- force is needed from your hands when you are doing them
- resistance is felt in your hands when doing them
- or when you are doing frequent, repetitive movements.

You don't need to change light or easy activities as they do not put strain on your joints.

Changing habits and routines

These booklets (listed on page 25) have lots of practical ideas using these basic joint protection principles. So how do you go about changing the normal way you have been doing an everyday activity for the last 10, 20, 30 years or more to a new way? It is not as easy as it sounds to change the habits and routines of a lifetime. We all do these movements normally without thinking.

There are 3 main stages to LEARNING NEW HABITS:

1. LEARNING

- Getting an “overall picture” in your mind of how to do the movement. We learn by watching demonstrations, hearing and reading instructions, seeing pictures, watching others and being physically guided.
- We also learn by “mental rehearsal” (or visualisation) – imagining how to do the action, making this “overall picture” clearer. This is very helpful for extra practice and to learn the activity or action faster.

2. FIXING

- Developing the skill or habit until it feels comfortable and no longer awkward or clumsy. This stage needs:

PRACTISE	– as regularly and often as possible
FEEDBACK	– are you getting it right? You get this from....

- Yourself: Watch what you do and tell yourself in your mind if you are doing it right or wrong and how to improve.
- Others: The clearer the feedback, the quicker you correct yourself and do the movement properly.

3. AUTOMATIC

- Doing it automatically, without thinking, even when doing or thinking something else or being distracted. This takes MORE PRACTICE. Even when you think you do it, it may still only be part of the time. KEEP ON PRACTISING!

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HOME PROGRAMME – MEETING 2

Try and do as much of this as you can. Spread it over the week. Most of the activities are quick.

1. Practise making a hot drink using the Joint Protection methods practised in meeting 2. Try this as often as you can during the week. Decide how often you think you could do this – 3, 5, 7 times or more in the week? Write down your decision below.

I AIM TO PRACTISE..... TIMES DURING THE WEEK.

Tick here every time you practise.

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

2. Look at the photographs of the Joint Protection methods from last week and this week (next page). Keep practising the four methods you chose last week. Add a further three from the choices this week.

- It helps to still keep practising just “single movements” to help you get the “picture” in your mind of the right action – until they get “fixed.”
- Include them whilst doing your daily activities as much as possible.

3. Spend time “mentally rehearsing,” or picturing the movements in your own mind, that you are learning. For instance, making a hot drink – this all helps!

4. Keep spending some time during the week “watching” how you use your hands during everyday activities. Choose a job you do at work, doing the gardening or housework. Think about the joint protection principles we discussed this week (listed earlier)

- How could you change any parts of the job to reduce strain?

5. Read the Arthritis Research UK booklet “Looking After Your Joints” (pages 10-22).

JOINT CARE METHODS 2

Remember to try each method and choose which is best for you – tick the small box for the method you prefer.

1. Filling a kettle



BETTER: Hold kettle with 2 hands as you fill, one on handle, one underneath.



BEST: Rest the kettle on the sink bottom or edge as it fills – don't take the weight on your hands. (If left inside the sink - this works best if you have a wire mesh basket. Make sure water can't get in the electric connection).



BEST: Use a lightweight plastic jug to fill the kettle – leaving your kettle by the plug. Use only the amount of water you need.



TICK HERE: for each time you practised this week....

JOINT CARE METHODS 2

Remember to try each method and choose which is best for you – tick the small box for the method you prefer.

2. Carrying a kettle



BETTER: Hold kettle with 2 hands and lift. With a “traditional” kettle keep your wrists held up.



BETTER: Hold jug kettle with 2 hands as you lift – firm grip on handle and weight spread across palm/forearm underneath (use a cloth if hot).



BEST: Slide the kettle – don’t lift. Or use a plastic jug to fill (see previous page) and avoid having to move the kettle at all.



TICK HERE: for each time you practised this week....

JOINT CARE METHODS 2

3. Pushing in a plug



BETTER: Use the palm of your hand.



BETTER: Use the side of your fist or forearm.



BEST: Use an adapted plug or plug loop fixed on plug.



TICK HERE: for each time you practised this week....

JOINT CARE METHODS 2

Remember to try each method and choose which is best for you – tick the small box for the method you prefer.

4. Pouring a kettle



BETTER: Firmly grip with two hands – with a traditional kettle keep the wrists bent up.



BETTER: Hold jug kettle with 2 hands as you lift – firm grip on handle and weight spread across palm/forearm (use a cloth if hot) firmly supporting side/bottom of kettle.



BETTER: (If it's really difficult) Use a kettle tipper – or **raise the kettle** on a solid piece of wood (or pan stand) and tilt the kettle (don't lift) to pour out.



TICK HERE: for each time you practised this week....

JOINT CARE METHODS 2

5. Carrying a tray



BETTER: One hand grips the tray edge, other palm/forearm takes the weight underneath.



BEST: Slide tray onto both palms and forearms.



TICK HERE: for each time you practised this week....

JOINT CARE METHODS 2

6. Carrying a shopping bag



BETTER: Carry in your arms,
close to your body.



BEST: Carry with handle over
forearm.



BEST: Carry weight over shoulder
– or use a back pack.



TICK HERE: for each time you practised this week....

JOINT CARE METHODS 2

7. Holding a bottle / carton



BEST: Use two hands firmly wrapped round the bottle / carton or container.



BEST: Keep milk (or other commonly used liquids) in a smaller container, like a lightweight jug.



TICK HERE: for each time you practised this week....

MEETING 3:
Task Analysis,
Joint Protection Practice
Making Changes: Goal-setting.

MEETING 3: Task Analysis, Practice and Making Changes: Goals-Setting

Analysing Activities to make changes

To help make activity changes, first “analyse” the steps making up the activity.

- What do you need to do?
- Then plan for easier methods.

Industry uses this approach (called Ergonomics) to prevent or reduce workers getting aches, pains, or injuries (such as repetitive strain injury).

Step 1: What does the activity involve?

We first divide the activity into stages. Then... (example making a snack)

Step 2: What solutions can we find?

The solutions to the stages that we tried out are shown:

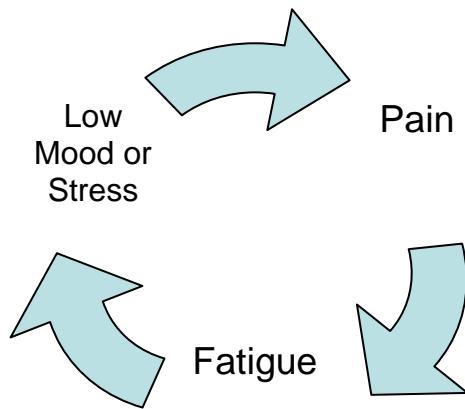
Stages: Making a snack of soup and cheese on toast	Solutions
Get things out from cupboards and fridge	<i>Two hands to lift and hold</i>
Turn on the cooker	Easy – no change needed
Open the can of soup	<i>Electric can opener</i>
Put soup in the pan and carry pan to the cooker	<i>Two hands</i>
Slice the bread	<i>“Ergonomic” bread knife; ready sliced or ask for bread to be sliced at baker’s</i>
Put the bread under the grill	<i>Two hands on grill handle</i>
Slice / grate the cheese	<i>Use cheese slicer; ergonomic knife; ready sliced or grated cheese; easy to use grater</i>
Pull out the grill pan, turn the bread over and put the cheese on	<i>Two hands on grill handle</i>
Pour the soup from the pan into a bowl	<i>Use flat bottomed ladle - soup bowl close to pan; or lift pan with two hands to pour</i>
Put the cheese on toast on a plate	Easy – no change needed
Carry the bowl and plate to the table	<i>Hold with two hands underneath each; use a tray – two hands underneath</i>
Carry the pan to the sink	<i>Two hands</i>
Wash up	<i>Use a thick handled wash-up brush or a round “palm held” brush</i>
Dry up	<i>Leave to drain; teacloth on work surface, rest pan on as you dry</i>
Wipe the surfaces	<i>Use flat of hand, not fingertips, as you wipe with cloth or sponge</i>

There were 15 stages in all. We found alternate ways for 13. The other two were easy and did not really need to be changed.

Writing down the stages helps you to *analyse* activities and find solutions. There may not always be answers for each stage, but even if you manage to change half, or just a third, this still reduces the aching and pain you feel.

Managing Pain and Fatigue

Many people with hand OA or hand pain find their hands tire quickly when doing activities. Or you may have pain in other joints and find that you tire more quickly because of this. The following few pages provide more helpful advice about managing this pain and tiredness.



There are many possible causes of pain and fatigue. The OA itself of course causes pain. Your muscles may tire more quickly because they are weaker, contributing to tiredness or fatigue. Frustration of the difficulty in doing daily activities can affect mood. Tiredness, pain and mood changes all interact.

There are some possible solutions listed overleaf. **Appendix 1** provides more books and information sources with advice about some of these issues.

Physical Causes	Possible Solutions
Osteoarthritis Pain	Use joint protection. Use painkillers if you need to. Discuss medication with your GP. Use heat/cold – see arc OA booklet
Poor sleep (eg. due to pain, worry, the menopause etc)	Painkillers before bedtime. For more tips try: http://www.bbc.co.uk/science/humanbody/sleep/articles/advicetips.shtml
Overdoing activities and overusing joints	Use activity pacing – see later.
Other health problems	Seek help from GP as appropriate.

Emotional Causes	Possible Solutions
Stress/ worry	Identify what is making you stressed – are there changes you can make to reduce this? Can you alter how you are thinking about what is causing your stress? Use deep breathing and relaxation methods.
Low mood	Discuss feelings with people close to you/ GP. Keep busy/active. Join in social activities/ groups.
Trying to hide your illness from others	Be more open with family and friends about what problems OA can cause. Give them copies of the information from this group.
Work pressures	See the Arthritis Care booklet – Working with Arthritis – for more ideas.

Environmental causes	Possible solutions
<u>Temperature too hot/cold</u>	Be aware of room temperature – ensure comfortable.
Uncomfortable furniture	Check it's the right height / size for you. The Arthritis Care booklet "Independent Living with Arthritis" has more information about furniture.
Awkward working positions	Analyse activities / Problem solve – use joint protection, pacing and positioning.
Excess stair climbing/ standing	Wear good shoes with cushioned insoles. Organise activities to reduce frequency of stair climbing. Store things in a basket at top/bottom stairs and take up in one go.

What may be making your pain and fatigue worse?

Read through the lists in the tables (page 39). Many people find a common reason is that they overdo activities and overuse joints. When it's a good day, you want to get on and do more, but then you might feel it later.

- You might have general fatigue or find that you can only do things with your hands for a while before you have to stop.

What can you do about this?

Here are some ideas to help you balance activity and rest. Taking more **short** rest breaks actually helps **increase** your level of physical activity overall, because you don't get so tired or "run down" so quickly. Think of your energy stores as a "battery." Regular short rests help recharge this, so you don't run down too quickly.

Balancing rest and activity: Pacing

- **Avoid "peaks and troughs"** – don't overdo it on your good days and suffer afterwards.
- **Take "micro breaks"** – stop activity and gently stretch / bend your joints, or shake them loose, to stop holding the same position or small range of movement for too long. Do this for 30-60 seconds every 5-10 minutes.
- **Plan regular rest breaks** into your day, eg. 5 minutes every 30-45 minutes; 15-20 minutes one to three times a day, depending on how much your arthritis is affecting you at the time.
- **Do the same amount of activity each day** – find the right balance between rest, and different activities for you. Build up your level of activity slowly if you have not been doing much recently.
- **Plan your activities** to make them more efficient (use the activity analysis).
- **Organise your work area to be more efficient.**
- **Plan your week ahead** to have a mix of high, medium and low energy-use activities each day.
- **Are you pacing and balancing your activities during the day to help reduce pain and fatigue?**

- Try keeping an activity diary (see Arthritis Research UK booklet page 24 for example) to help you take regular rests and plan a balance of activities.
- Monitor what you are doing for a few days.
- Jot down the main activity you do every half-hour and whether it is a high, medium or low energy activity.
- Note when you took a rest.
- If you are doing too many high energy activities for too long without a rest – try alternating high with medium and low energy activities every hour or so.
- **Are you getting enough sleep?**

Other reading on managing tiredness:

1. **The Arthritis Helpbook:** Chapter 17
2. **“Good Living with Osteoarthritis”**

See **Appendix 1** for how to get these books.

CHANGING HABITS

Last week, we discussed how changing new habits is not just a matter of learning what to do. Once you have got the ideas, you need to actually put them into practice in your everyday life. This needs regular, frequent practice for the movements to begin to feel natural and automatic to you.

However, it's all very well to say “do it regularly at home” but this is not always so easy. There are many barriers, for example:

- Too busy, too much to do
- Too many demands from others at home and work
- Getting bored or forgetting
- Feeling there are too many things to change and it's impossible
- Not being sure you want to change.

If you think it is a barrier of “attitude” – not wanting to change. Ask yourself why? Do you feel it is “giving in” or “acting older” to use Lifestyle Management? That you don't see why you need to change?

Ask yourself some hard questions.

- Are you having too many aches and pains trying to do your everyday jobs “normally”?
- Does this mean you aren’t able to do as many things you want to and enjoy in life?

Look back at the section on **Why Make Changes** in Meeting 1 (pages 12-13). Having a balance of activities you have to do, with those you enjoy doing, is essential for good health. Making changes will help you be **healthier** in the long term – and hopefully happier.

People move through different “**Stages of Change**” as they are taking up any new lifestyle management method:

- 0 Not thinking of changing (not planning to use eg. joint protection, exercise more for health, eat healthily)
- 1 Starting to think about change (if you are at this course – you’re at least here!)
- 2 Deciding about your attitudes and beliefs towards using lifestyle management methods (will they work for you?)
- 3 Getting started.
- 4 Sticking with it.
- 5 Doing the lifestyle management method/s enough at an effective level
- 6 Looking out for and overcoming problems and barriers and keeping it up!

Hopefully now you are at Stage 2 – 3 and you want to make sure you keep moving along these stages.

The barriers you face are very real problems. One way of motivating yourself to overcome these is to make an agreement with yourself, ie **SETTING GOALS**.

There are two types – long term and short term:

Long term goals:

These are general eg:

“I want to reduce the amount of pain or aching I have when working (at home or work) and feel less tired at the end of the day.”

“I want to keep up my hobby / work....”

We talked about these in meeting 1. Whatever is important to you, look at the steps to help achieve this goal step-by-step. These are:

Short term goals:

The small steps that you need to make today and this week to help you on your way. They need to be **specific**. It helps to **write** an **ACTION PLAN**.

ACTION PLANS

To successfully change to new “health” and “hand” habits, set yourself realistic goals each week.

1. **ASSESS** yourself honestly and start where you are. Be realistic about your current ability and the time you have to practise or use the lifestyle management method you choose.
 - Start with something reasonable. Don’t be over-optimistic. If you don’t succeed you are more likely to give up. Any improvement is better than none! Build up slowly. Aim to change a few things at a time.
2. **ACTION** – be specific about what you will do. For example, practise turning a tap using your palm, practise making a drink using joint protection methods, analyse your hobby and look for easier ways of doing it....
3. **HOW MUCH** – will you do? For example, how many times will you practise a specific joint protection technique or use joint protection during a specific kitchen, home or work activity you want to change?
4. **HOW OFTEN** – will you practise these? For example, twice a day, 4 times a week. Give yourself time off. Don’t feel you have to do the action everyday. That way if you have a bad day or are busy, you won’t feel guilty.
5. **HOW SURE** – are you that you can do this? On a scale of 0 – 10 (with 0 totally unsure and 10 totally sure):
 - “How sure are you that you can complete this specific goal?”
 - “How sure are you that you can do the whole ACTION PLAN?”
 - If you score **7 or more** out of 10 – you probably will do it. If you score less – drop your plan down a bit until you feel sure.
6. Give yourself a reward for achieving your action plan!

A reward may be, for instance, a rest, a cup of tea and a biscuit when you have completed a goal. If you do all the things you planned to for the week – do something you find a treat. Give yourself a “pat on the back” – tell yourself how well you are doing by achieving these! Plan your reward ahead, so you have something to look forward to.

Some weeks you may do less than others – you may not be feeling so well, or there may be a lot of other things happening that week (or you are on holiday). Don’t see this as a failure and a step backwards – keep on doing what you can realistically each week – **take things one step at a time.**

Make the Action Plan REALISTIC. Something you know that you could do, but is still a bit of a challenge. (How many New Year’s resolutions have you broken in the past, because you bit off more than you could chew?)

There is an example of an Action Plan on the next page. Most of all, decide what is important for you to do.

Writing it down increases the chance that you will do it!

ACTION PLAN

Dates from: Monday _____ **to: Sunday** _____

The Plan:

1. Use the joint protection methods making a hot drink 5 times
2. "Imagine" using the hot drink joint protection methods 3 times
3. Listen to relaxing music tape before bedtime on 3 evenings
4. Practise using joint protection during gardening activities twice

I am sure I can complete this plan (circle):



When I complete the plan, my reward will be:

Put feet up with a cappuccino and a biscuit!

How well did I do with my plan?

The home programmes so far have already partly set goals for you.

This week set your own goals. When the meetings finish, keep setting goals weekly for yourself so you keep making changes, until you feel the new joint protection methods you want to develop and the hand exercises are now habits.

HOME PROGRAMME – MEETING 3

Some ideas to try this week are:

1. On the next few pages, there are more photos of joint protection methods for doing everyday tasks that we have practised during the meeting. Try each method. Decide which is best for you and mark with a tick.
2. Look through the photos of Joint Protection methods from sessions 1-3 – to get a clear picture in your mind of these strain-reducing ways. Are you doing these yet? Keep practising!
3. Mentally rehearse (or practise in your mind) making a hot drink and snack meal using the movements you have decided work best for you.
4. Try pacing activities for 2 days this week
 - Micro breaks (30 second rests every 5 minutes, stretch your hands)
 - Take a short rest (3-5 minutes) every hour
 - Balance light and heavy activities
 - Use the activity pacing chart if you want to help you see what you are doing on a day before you pace. Try pacing. How do you feel after? Does it make a difference?
5. Decide on your own goals for practice. Some ideas are:
 - making a hot drink using joint protection methods 5 times a week;
 - making a meal using joint protection methods 3 x a week
 - trying a warm bath before bedtime 1 x per week
 - trying a soothing music tape before bedtime x 1 per week
 - Decide how often works best for you.....
6. **Write down your own goals in the ACTION PLAN overleaf for the next week, check how sure you are you will do them – and of course, complete your plan!**
7. Read pages 22-26 in the Arthritis Research UK booklet “Looking After Your Joints.”

ACTION PLAN

JOINT CARE METHODS 3

1. Lifting a grill pan



BETTER: Use 2 hands on handle



BEST: Use two hands – with the weight on palms. Either two hands on grill pan or one hand on grill and one on handle.



TICK HERE: for each time you practised this week....

JOINT CARE METHODS 3

2. Emptying a pan



BETTER: Use 2 hands on handle as pour out.



BEST: Use two hands, one on handle, other palm supporting the base of the pan (use a cloth).



BEST: Leave the pan on the work surface (flat or tipped with one hand) and ladle / spoon out the contents. (For vegetables, use a vegetable strainer / chip basket).



TICK HERE: for each time you practised this week....

JOINT CARE METHODS 3

3. Close drawers



BETTER: Use palm, keep wrists as straight as possible.



BEST: Use your hip.



TICK HERE: for each time you practised this week...

4. Washing up



BETTER: Use a wash up brush held in your fist.



TICK here: each time you practised this week....

JOINT CARE METHODS 3

5. Squeeze out cloths



BETTER: Wrap cloth ends round the tap and twist.



BEST: press out cloth/ sponge with palm, keeping fingers straight and thumb stretched out.



TICK HERE: for each time you practised this week...

MEETING 4:

**Revisiting the 6 Ps:
Pain, Protection, Planning, Pacing, Positioning and
Problem Solving.**

Review

Continuing to Make Changes

MEETING 4: Revisiting the 6 Ps: Pain, Protection, Planning, Pacing, Positioning and Problem Solving. Review. Continuing Making Changes

At the start of this course, you thought about which everyday activities caused you pain, aching and tiredness. So far, we have looked at ways to reduce strain on joints (Joint Protection) and practised these in kitchen tasks. You can, of course, apply **protection, planning, pacing and positioning** to many other everyday and work tasks to reduce hand pain.

Often people with hand OA say they find solutions to everyday problems through “trial and error”. Whilst practical, it takes **time** to make changes. Experience shows people who use a planned approach, change habits more quickly and effectively. This is called:

PROBLEM SOLVING

Use a piece of paper or keep a notebook to jot down your ideas:

1. Identify a **specific** problem – tackle one thing at a time.
2. Analyse the task:
 - What are the different stages involved in the task. See the notes from last week on how to do this.
 - What are the movements involved - do any need changing to reduce strain?
 - Why is a particular action difficult (pain, weak grip, tired muscles)?
 - So what is the best approach, or mix of approaches, to take? Use joint protection to reduce strain? Plan and pace to reduce fatigue?
3. Are there particular stages needing changing most?
4. Use the ideas from the Joint Protection, Planning, and Pacing principles to help you plan solutions for each stage.
5. List the possible solutions to solve the problem.
6. Select one method and try it out.
7. Did it work?

YES (Check it is best – least strain – for you)

NO (try another method)

PRACTISE!!!

Keep trying other ideas.
If still No: Can you ask someone else?
Can you do it less often? Give it up?
Or just accept you'll struggle with this one
– but make as many other things easier.

In the last resort, there isn't always a solution to everything. But if you reduce strain in as many ways as possible, say 50% of tasks or parts of a task, then you will still be reducing pain and strain.

Planning principles – making everyday jobs easier

These questions help with planning:

1. Is the task **really** necessary?

If it is necessary, can you make it any easier.....

2. Could you change the order of doing different parts of the job making it more efficient?
3. Can you leave any part of the job out and still get the same result?
4. Have you put the materials and equipment needed in easy reach?
5. Do your storage areas contain only the needed materials, easy to hand? De-clutter your cupboards and rooms!
 - Could you use kitchen and office organisers (dividers, turntables, racks, pullout shelves) to make things easier to get hold of?
6. Do you get together the materials for the task ready for use first?
7. Would you find it helpful to use wheels? (eg a basket on wheels; a “funky trundle”; a laptop briefcase with wheels and handle).
8. Are you working too fast?
9. Can you get someone else do part of the task?

Think about other principles we have been discussing over the last few weeks too, such as....

POSITIONING principles – cutting down on the aches

1. Are you using efficient positioning and posture when standing, sitting, and lifting? How can you improve these?
 - For example, standing straighter, avoiding hunched shoulders and neck or overreaching with your arms, keep things you lift close to the body.
2. Are you using two hands to the best advantage?
3. Are your seats / stools comfortable and of the right height? Do they give your arms support so you can easily rest your hands and arms?

Joint Protection principles – reducing the strain on joints (Meeting 2)

1. Distribute the weight of what you lift over several joints, for example spread the load between two hands.
2. Avoid putting strain on your thumb/s and repetitive thumb movements.
3. Avoid prolonged grip in one position.
4. Use as large a grip as possible.
5. Reduce the effort needed to do a task:
 - Use a labour saving gadget, or different design of equipment
 - Avoid lifting heavy objects - find another way to move or slide instead
 - Reduce the weight of what you lift

If you have problems with pain and/or tiredness at the end or during the day, or your hands get quickly tired:

Pacing principles – saving your energy (for better things)

Think of yourself as a “battery.” Rest is a way of topping yourself up and avoiding getting drained too soon.

1. Take “microbreaks” – 30-60 seconds or so every 5-10 minutes when you stretch your joints and move around gently.
2. Balance your rest and activity – take a few minutes break every half hour
3. Plan the rest breaks **before** you start jobs.
4. Balance heavy and lighter jobs through the day and the week.
5. Ensure you balance your activity, rest and exercise during the day/week.

Remember:

Joint protection, keeping active and rest are complementary.

When your muscles, which help protect and move weakened joints, are tired then more strain is put on your joints. This can cause increased pain and possibly damage to the joint.

- Rest (especially those micro-breaks) helps muscles and the joint support structures (capsules and ligaments) to “recover” from daily strains.
- Swapping activities between heavier and lighter ones gives you regular changes of position and so gives muscles and joints a “break.” (A change can also be (nearly) as good as a rest).
- Keeping active and general exercise helps improve your muscle strength and helps support your joints. “Fitter” muscles tire less easily.
- Changing your activities to make them easier through using Joint Protection helps reduce strain.

The Arthritis Research UK booklet “Looking After Your Joints when you have Arthritis” - discusses the need for rest and joint protection.

CONCLUSION

This is the last meeting in this programme. On the following pages is the last home programme. There are a number of spare Action Plan sheets in **Appendix 2**. Please do use them to help you keep practising what we have tried in this programme.

There are a few spare pages for notes too and some more information sources listed in **Appendix 1**.

The role of the Occupational Therapist is explained further in the leaflet "Occupational Therapy and Arthritis".

Good luck with the Action Plans!

HOME PROGRAMME – MEETING 4

Some suggestions for you to try...

1. Check back through the workbook ...Have you tried all the methods in the pictures yet? Keep practising!
2. Look through the list of everyday problems you made in the home programme for meeting 1. Go through this:
 - Have you found a solution to each of these during the course?
 - If yes, are you doing the alternative now?
 - If yes, cross it off your list.
3. For those problems left, write a goal to problem solve solutions to a specific problem each week. And a second goal of putting these solutions into practice.
4. Decide on your own goals for practice for the next week – related to using joint protection, pacing and planning, problem solving, managing fatigue Practise using mental rehearsal too if you found this helps.
5. **Write your Action Plan** - use the diary sheets too if you want to record how well you do with your goals.
6. Continue to make a weekly Action Plan for at least a further 4 weeks. As the weeks go by, the principles and methods we have tried become more of a habit - and your Action Plan changes as you don't need to consciously practise some methods any more – they have just become new habits.
7. Finally, go through this Workbook again in a month's time. Look through all the tasks and ideas we have practised. Have some become automatic yet? Are you doing some for at least half of the time? Practise regularly again until you find these are automatic and become a habit.

Action Plans help you make a contract with yourself that you are less likely to break.

**We wish you all the best in your endeavours
to change your hand habits.**

Some other helpful gadgets you can find in the shops....



“Good Grips” easy peeler –

A thick, non-slip handle makes gadgets easier to hold.



There are a number of ring-pull can gadgets available – again look for thick, non-slip handles.



Ergonomic (or good grip) bread knives – have the handle set at right angles. These are less strain on wrists and thumb.

Appendix 1

Further Information

APPENDIX 1: FURTHER INFORMATION

BOOKS

You should be able to order these from any library or good bookshop with a book ordering service. If you have difficulty, try www.amazon.co.uk online. New editions are published every few years – so check if there is a newer edition since the time of writing this workbook.

1. Kate Lorig and James Fries (2006). **“The Arthritis Helpbook: a tested self-management method for coping with arthritis and fibromyalgia.”** Sixth edition. Perseus books (Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA).
 - Lots of practical advice
2. Bird H, Green C, Hamer A et al (2006). **“Arthritis: Improve your health, ease pain and live life to the full.”** Dorling Kindersley.
 - Lots of practical advice, well-illustrated
- 3 Arthritis Foundation (2005). **“The Arthritis Foundation’s Guide to Good Living with Osteoarthritis.”**
4. Arthritis Foundation (2001). **“Tips for Good Living with Arthritis.”**

ARTHRITIS CHARITIES

Arthritis Research UK:

Arthritis Research UK produce a wide variety of information leaflets and a quarterly magazine “Arthritis Today” which has lots of practical information as well as up to date information about research and treatment for arthritis. You can download all their information sheets and booklets from their website or write to them direct requesting an order form to receive these by mail.

Arthritis Research UK
Copeman House
St Mary’s Gate
Chesterfield
Derbyshire, S41 7TD

www.arthritisresearchuk.org

Arthritis Care

Also produce a wide range of very useful information leaflets/ booklets, all downloadable from their website as well as available free by writing to:

Arthritis Care
Floor 4, Linen Court
London, N1 6AD
Telephone: 020 7380 6540
www.arthritiscare.org.uk

If you would like to hear more about other people's experiences of living with osteoarthritis – and you have access to the internet – go to their website

- Click on the video diaries link.

Several of the diaries are made by people with osteoarthritis.

They have a regular magazine with practical tips and information. They also run an excellent arthritis education programme nationally called "Challenging Arthritis". If you want to have a "refresher" or simply another chance to meet others with arthritis and swap ideas – these are very positive programmes – well worth going to. They are run by people with arthritis. Arthritis Care is often looking for people willing to train to run these programmes. Get in contact.

NHS Direct:

NHS Direct provides information and advice about health, illness and health services, to enable patients to make decisions about their healthcare and that of their families. NHS Direct delivers telephone and e-health information services day and night direct to the public. Over two million people now access NHS Direct every month. For health information and advice, contact NHS Direct on 0845 4647 or www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

Local support groups

Both Arthritis Research UK and Arthritis Care have a network of local branches, which do a variety of activities, including self-help groups, regular information meetings and/or fundraising. Please contact the charities to find details of groups local to you – or ask the programme leader who can give you details.

NICE: National Institute of Health and Care Excellence

This national organisation produces guidelines for health professionals in how to assess, treat and manage osteoarthritis. If you are interested in further information, the guidelines can be found at:

<http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/index.jsp?action=byID&o=11926>

Arthritis Foundation – USA

www.arthritis.org

This website has a wealth of information on arthritis. Lots of practical tips sections can be found under the Resources section, including advice on managing work, relationships, practical tips on managing everyday activities. There is also a wide range of publications as well as on-line brochures you can download.

In future the site may have an on-line arthritis self-management programme available – so keep an eye out for what develops on the site.

The Arthritis Society – Canada

The website contains lots of practical “Tips on Living Well” with Arthritis. For example in the “Managing Daily Activities” section there are lots of practical ideas on Looking After Joints

www.arthritis.ca

If you are still working and need help at work:

There are some good booklets published with advice on helping people with arthritis stay in work. One is published by the National Rheumatoid Arthritis Society. **Although it has rheumatoid arthritis in the title, the advice is just the same for people with osteoarthritis.**

“I want to work: a self-help guide for people with rheumatoid arthritis.”

Available from

National Rheumatoid Arthritis Society

Unit B4 Westacott Business Centre

Westacott Way

Littlewick Green

Maidenhead

Berkshire

SL6 3RT

www.nras.org.uk

Appendix 2
Spare Action Plan Charts

ACTION PLAN

ACTION PLAN

ACTION PLAN

ACTION PLAN

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