

Hand Therapy

Hand Therapy is a type of rehabilitation performed by an occupational or physical therapist with patients that suffer from conditions affecting the hands and upper extremities. Therapy enables patients to hasten their return to a productive lifestyle.



Patients who are candidates for hand therapy may have been affected by an accident or trauma leaving them with wounds, scars, burns, injured tendons or nerves, fractures, or even amputations of the fingers, hands or arms. Others include patients who suffer

from conditions such as carpal tunnel syndrome and tennis elbow, as well as from chronic problems such as arthritis or a neurologic condition (i.e. stroke).

What Does Hand Therapy Provide?

- Treatments without an operation
- Help with recent or long-lasting pain
- Help to reduce sensitivity from nerve problems
- Learning to feel again after a nerve injury
- Learning home exercise programs to help with movement and strength
- How to make splints to help prevent or improve stiffness (**Figure 1**)
- Learning to complete everyday activities with special tools

If surgery is needed, hand therapists can also help with a patient's recovery. This may include assistance with helping wounds heal, preventing infection, scar management and reducing swelling.

Getting Back to Work

Hand therapists are able to talk with employers about preventing problems for workers with hand or arm symptoms. They may recommend changes at your place of work or different ways of doing your job to help ensure a healthy style of work.

Find a Hand Therapist

Search for a hand therapist in your area by going to www.asht.org, the official website of the American Society of Hand Therapists.

Figure 1. Examples of hand splints

