

OSTEOARTHRITIS

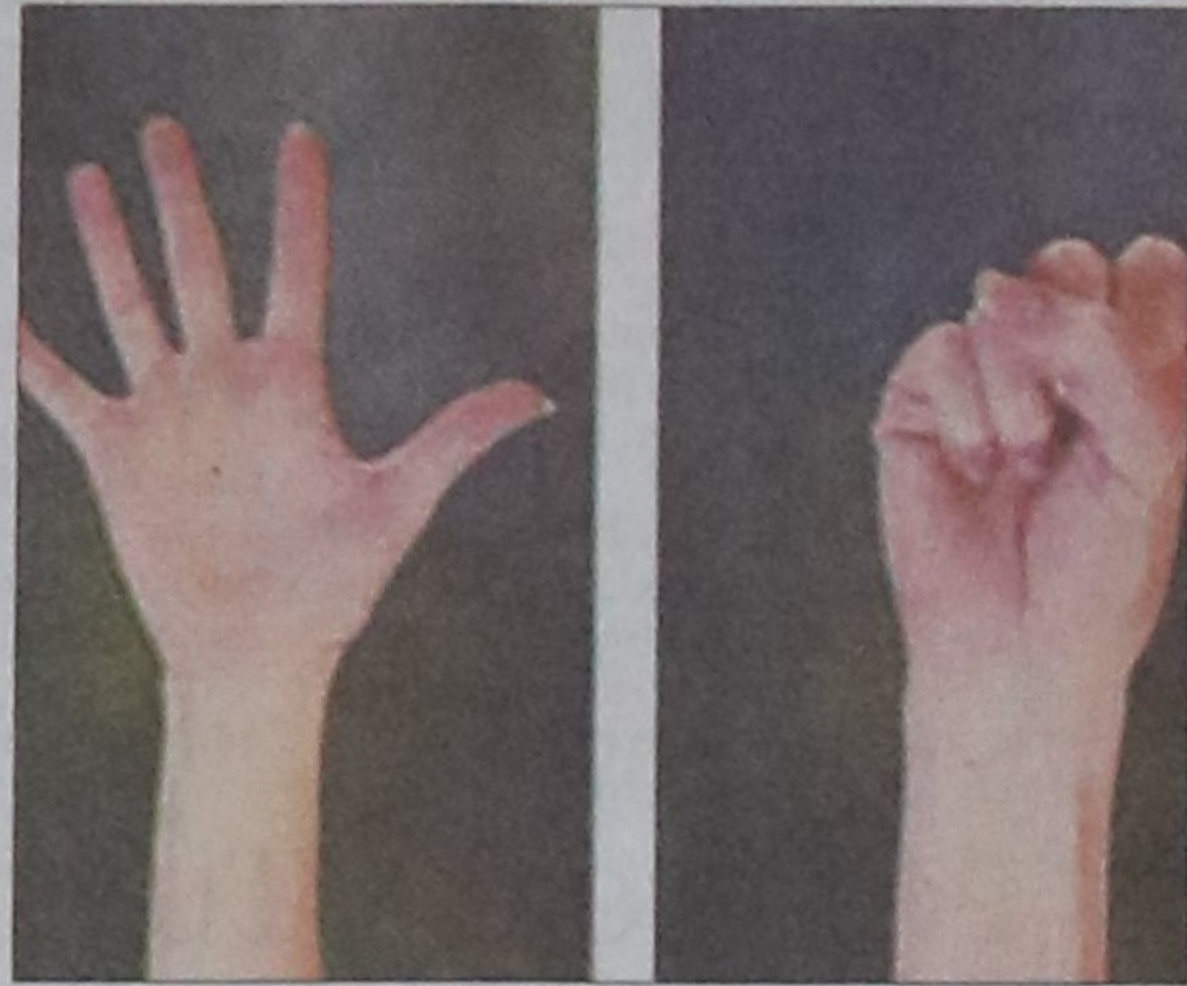
Hand exercises for arthritis pain relief

The following hand exercises show moves that can provide arthritis pain relief. You can do these hand exercises daily or, preferably, several times a day. You might find it helps to do hand exercises while soaking your hands in warm water. Know your limitations, though. Hand exercises should not cause pain.



Bend your fingers

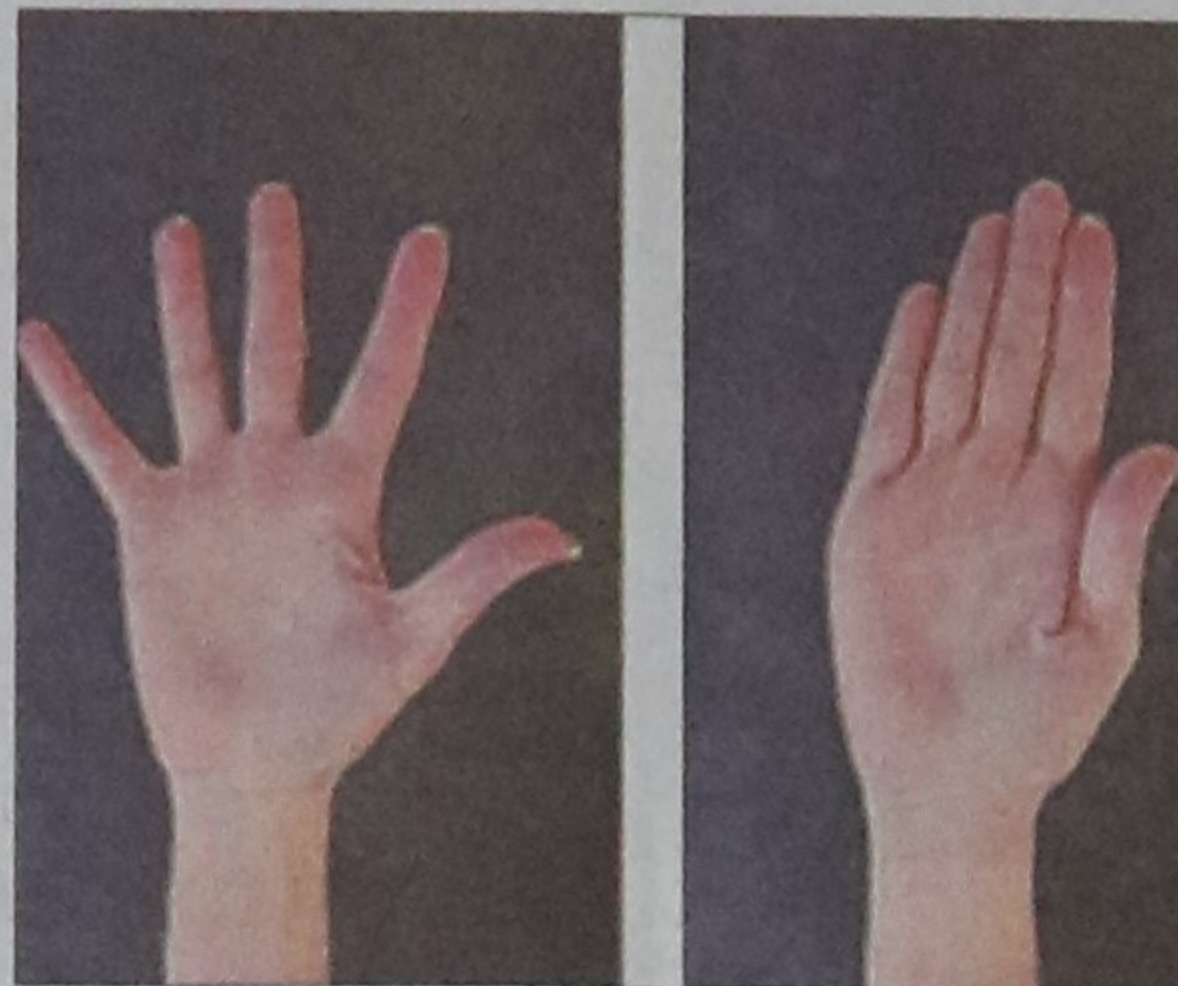
Start your hand exercises by relaxing your hand. Start with your fingers straight and close together. Bend the end and middle joints of your fingers. Keep your wrist and knuckles straight. Moving slowly and smoothly, return your hand to the starting position. Repeat with your other hand. If you can, perform multiple repetitions of this exercise on each hand.



Make a fist

Start with your fingers straight and spread apart. Make a loose, gentle fist and wrap your thumb around the outside of your fingers. Be careful not to squeeze your fingers together too tightly. Moving slowly and smoothly, return to the starting position.

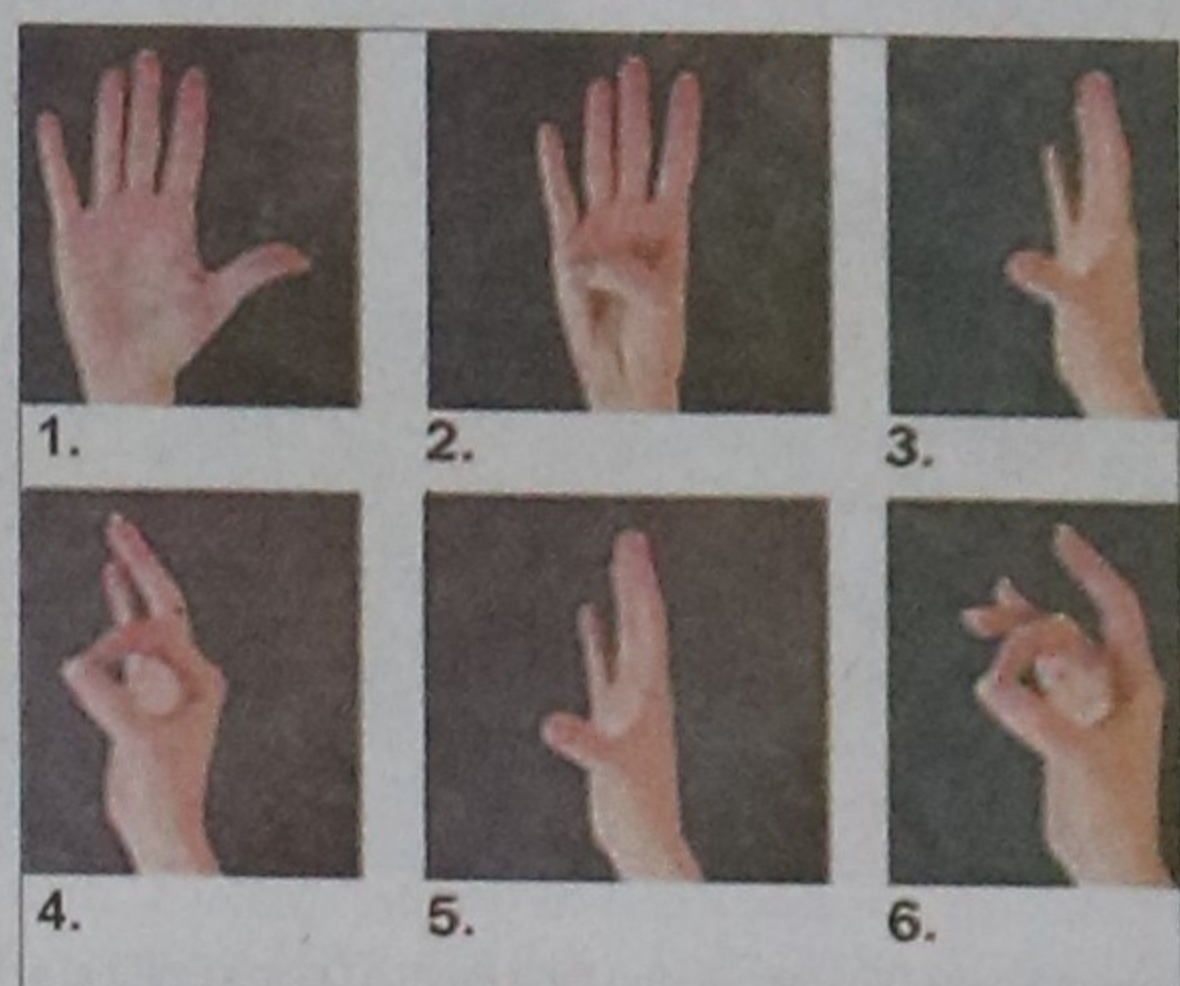
Repeat the procedure as your convenience. Perform this exercise with both hands.



Open your hand wide

Spread your fingers apart as wide as you can and hold that position. Slowly relax your fingers and bring them together. Return to the open-wide position. Repeat with each hand and gradually increase the number of repetitions.

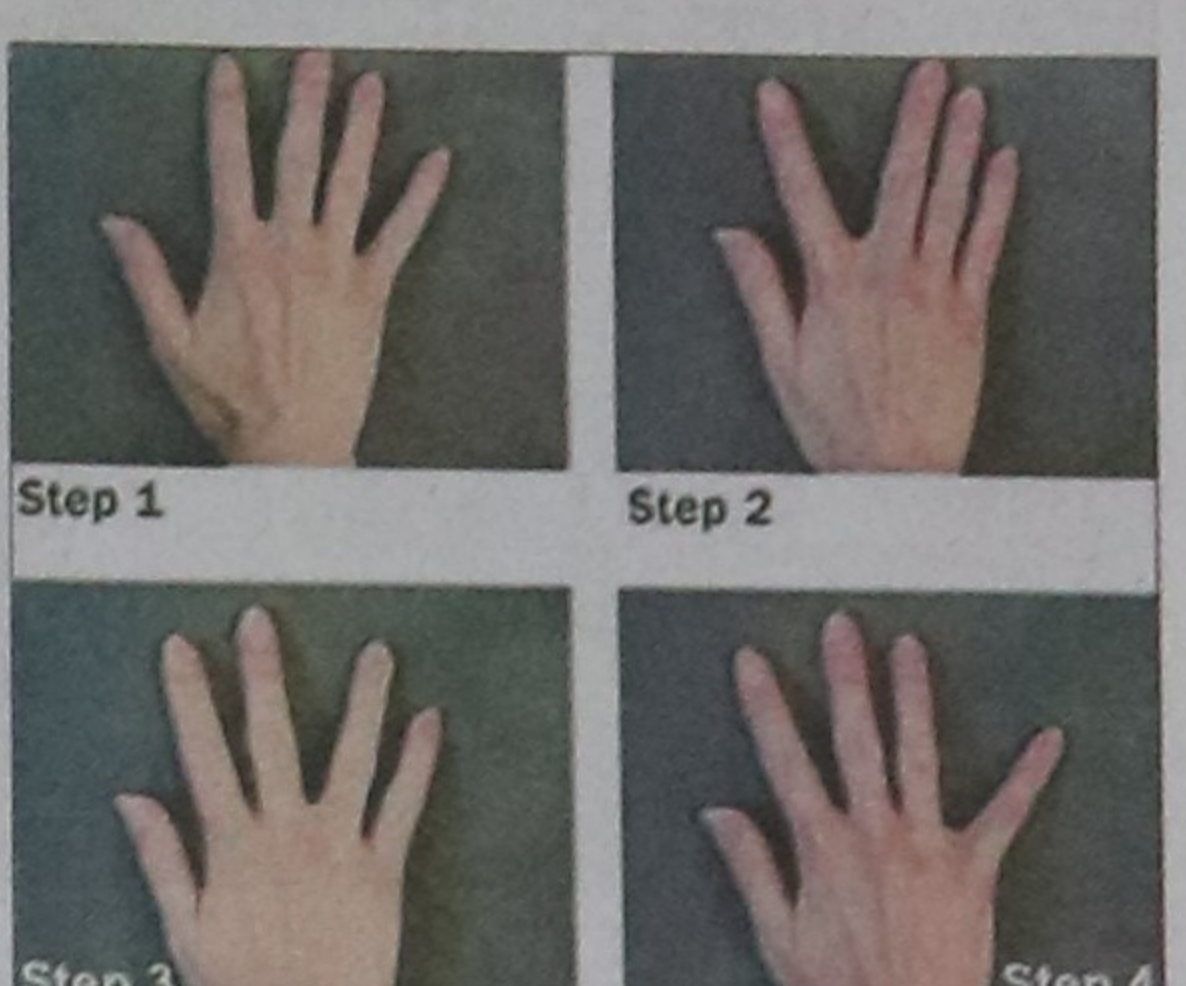
This procedure helps to ease the morning stiffness and get relaxed.



Touch your fingertips

Straighten your fingers and thumb. Bend your thumb across your palm, touching the tip of your thumb to the pad of your hand just below your pinky finger. If you cannot make your thumb touch, just stretch as far as you can. Return your thumb to its starting position, as shown in image 3.

For the next exercise, form the letter O by touching your thumb to each fingertip, as shown in images 4 through 6. Moving slowly and smoothly, touch your index finger to your thumb, then straighten your fingers. Touch your middle finger to your thumb and straighten. Follow with your ring and pinky fingers. Repeat both exercises with your other hand.



Walk your fingers

Rest your hand on a flat surface, such as a tabletop, with your palm facing down and your fingers spread slightly apart. Moving one finger at a time, slowly walk your fingers toward your thumb. Start by lifting and moving your index finger toward your thumb. Follow by lifting and moving your middle finger toward your thumb. Proceed with moving your ring finger and then your pinky finger toward your thumb. Do not move your wrist or thumb while doing this exercise. Repeat with your other hand.

IAS calls for action instead of rhetoric at UN meeting on AIDS

STAR HEALTH REPORT

The International AIDS Society (IAS) yesterday urged government and fellow civil society leaders attending the upcoming UN High Level Meeting on AIDS to address the gap between commitments and results on universal access to HIV prevention, care and treatment interventions.

IAS President Dr Pedro Cahn noted that the upcoming UN High Level Meeting, to be held 10-11 June in New York, was the last opportunity for the international community to review progress in meeting commitments made in the 2001 Declaration of Commitment and 2006 Political Declaration.

A June 2nd report, released by WHO, UNAIDS and UNICEF, revealed that, although progress is improving in areas such as access to antiretroviral therapy (ART) and care and treatment services for women and children, most countries are far off target to reach universal access by 2010, and most people living with HIV remain unaware that they are infected.

ART coverage remains unacceptably low at roughly 31% of people in need of treatment, and many countries are still not engaging populations most vulnerable to HIV, such as sex workers, men who have sex with men (MSM) and injecting drug users (IDUs) in their national HIV plans. Women and girls bear the brunt of the epidemic, due to their biological and social vulnerability to HIV infection.

And while services to prevent mother to child transmission have increased, they continue to remain woefully inadequate. And

for every two people who start antiretroviral therapy five become newly infected.

"This meeting is an opportunity for countries to be accountable for the commitments they have made, to place evidence over ideology and action over political expediency", said Dr Cahn. "The Secretary General himself has indicated progress to date is insufficient to meet universal access targets, and that legal barriers are impeding progress to reaching vulnerable populations. This is the last opportunity for governments to remove those barriers and for the international community to come together on a global health crisis that has already claimed over 25 million lives".

The UN High Level Meeting is the second and final scheduled review of progress on meeting commitments made by the international community at the UN General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS (UNGASS) in 2001.

The IAS is the world's leading independent association of HIV professionals, with more than 10,000 members from 180 countries. The IAS is a non-profit organisation founded in 1988, and acts as an independent voice in the global response to AIDS on behalf of its members. The Society plays the custodian of the International AIDS Conferences, the paramount gathering of all disciplines in HIV/AIDS, held every two years, and organizes the IAS Conference on HIV Pathogenesis, Treatment and Prevention.

Mercury teeth fillings may harm some

REUTERS, Washington

Silver-colored metal dental fillings contain mercury that may cause health problems in pregnant women, children and fetuses, the Food and Drug Administration said on Wednesday after settling a related lawsuit.

As part of the settlement with several consumer advocacy groups, the FDA agreed to alert consumers about the potential risks on its website and to issue a more specific rule next year for fillings that contain mercury, FDA spokeswoman Peper Long said.

"Dental amalgams contain mercury, which may have neurotoxic effects on the nervous systems of developing children and fetuses," the FDA said in a notice on its Web site.

"Pregnant women and persons who may have a health condition that makes them more sensitive to mercury exposure, including individuals with existing high levels of mercury bioburden, should not avoid seeking dental care, but should discuss options with their health practitioner," the agency said.

The FDA said it did not recommend that people who currently have mercury fillings get them removed.

The FDA must issue the new rules in July 2009, Long said. Such a rule could impact makers of metal fillings, which include Dentsply International Inc and Danaher Corp unit Kerr.



The new rule will give the agency "special controls (that) can provide reasonable assurance of the safety and effectiveness of the product," Long said.

The lawsuit settlement was reached on Monday with several advocacy groups, including Moms

Against Mercury, which had sought to have mercury fillings removed from the U.S. market.

While the FDA previously said various studies showed no harm from mercury fillings, some consumer groups contend the fillings can trigger a range of health prob-

lems such as multiple sclerosis and Alzheimer's disease. In 2006, an FDA advisory panel of outside experts said most people would not be harmed by them, but said the agency needed more information.

Mercury has been linked to brain and kidney damage at certain levels. Amalgams contain half mercury and half a combination of other metals.

Charles Brown, a lawyer for one of the groups called Consumers for Dental Choice, said the agency's move represented an about-face. "Gone, gone, gone are all of FDA's claims that no science exists that amalgam is unsafe," he said in a statement.

"We do believe that the agency will ask for the label to indicate that mercury is an ingredient in the filling, and that special populations should be exempt from such fillings, such as: nursing women, pregnant women, young children, and immuno-compromised individuals," Smolinski wrote in a research note.

Fewer patients have been opting for mercury fillings in recent years, instead choosing lighter options such as tooth-colored resin composites.

Only 30 percent of fillings given to patients were mercury-filled ones as of 2003, according to the American Dental Association (ADA). Other options include glass cement and porcelain as well as other metals such as gold, but they cost more and are less durable, the group has said.

HAVE A NICE DAY

DR RUBAIOL MURSHED

All health information to keep you up to date



The sweet solution - 3

Doctors are not absolutely sure why honey heals but they are learning new things about honey everyday. Researchers have started believing that the therapeutic potential of honey is grossly underutilised.

If we judge with full justice, the results are sweeter than honey. Many have found raw or unpasteurised honey more helpful for its positive effects. Try to replace white sugar with honey. Let us start visiting honey's medicinal world.

Quality life
The most long-lived people in the world are all regular users of honey. Senior citizens, who take honey and cinnamon powder in equal parts, are more alert and flexible.

An interesting fact, yet to be explained, is that beekeepers suffer less from cancer and arthritis than any other occupational group worldwide. Tea made with honey and cinnamon powder, when taken regularly arrests the negative effects of old age.

The darker the honey, the more minerals it contains. Honey helps in glycogen restoration after a workout. Ancient Greek athletes took honey for stamina before competing and as a reviver after competition.

Daily use of honey and cinnamon powder strengthens the immune system and protects the body from bacteria and viral attacks. Constant use of honey strengthens the white blood corpuscles to fight bacteria and viral diseases.

Distressed tummy
According to the studies done in India, Japan and Canada, it is revealed that if honey is taken with cinnamon powder, the stomach is relieved from gas. This mixture also cures stomachache and relieves acidity and digests the heaviest of meals.

Research conducted by Somal, et al (1994) at New Zealand's Waikato University

The writer is a Healthcare Management Specialist and Visiting Professor of North South University (NSU), Dhaka, Bangladesh.

WHO bridges rich-poor intellectual property split

REUTERS, Geneva

The World Health Organisation's member governments overcame a rich-poor rift over how to manage intellectual property and endorsed a strategy to help developing countries access more life-saving medicines.

At the United Nations agency's annual policy-setting meeting in Geneva, governments also called for WHO Director-General Margaret Chan to finalise a plan of action boosting incentives for drug makers to tackle diseases that mainly afflict the poor.

"This is a major breakthrough for public health that will benefit many millions of people for many years to come," Chan said at the end of the week-long World Health Assembly meetings.

The intellectual property resolution requests that Chan, who succeeded Lee Jong-wook as WHO chief in 2006, "finalise urgently the outstanding components of the plan of actions, including timeframes, progress indications and estimated funding needs."

Those will be reviewed at the next WHO assembly in May 2009. Public health activists applauded the hard-fought consensus reached by the 190 countries represented in the Geneva talks.

"The WHO has taken a big step forward to change the way we think about innovation and access to medicines," said James Love of Knowledge Ecology International, who noted accord "on topics that were considered controversial only a short time ago."

