

Hand Therapy

Desensitisation

After an injury and / or surgery, skin and scars can become sensitive.

Feelings can include:

- burning or stinging
- tingling (or electric sensation)
- tenderness

Desensitisation activities can reduce these symptoms and speed your recovery.

Using the affected area for everyday activities is the best way to improve the hypersensitivity of the hand. Things like wash the dishes, gardening and getting dressed are the most important part of your desensitisation program.

The following program can also help with this sensitivity.

It should be done: _____ times per day for _____ minutes

- Massage** the sensitive area with a moisturising cream. Start with light massage towards the edges of the sensitive area. Gradually increase the pressure and contact over areas with the most sensitivity. Ease off if painful. Do not massage over open wounds.
- Tapping** with your fingers, starting at the edges of the sensitive area. Slowly increase the pressure over the area that is most sensitive. Alternatively, tap with soft objects (e.g. foam) and progress to firmer objects (e.g. pen).
- Immerse** the sensitive area in water just slightly warmer/cooler than room temperature. Gradually progress to warmer/cooler. Be sure to test the area with normal skin first to make sure you don't get a burn.



Desensitisation (cont)

- Textures** can be rubbed over the sensitive areas. Try to use a few textures that are irritating to your skin! Start with the least irritating until it doesn't bother you anymore. Progress to the more annoying textures.

Texture options

Soft	Rough
Cotton	Towelling
Wool	Velcro
Felt	Carpet
Foam	Fine sandpaper

- Immerse** the sensitive area in a bucket / bag of small objects and pour the pieces over the affected area. Begin with less irritating textures.

Texture options

Soft	Rough
Cotton balls	Sand
Foam	Rice
Polystyrene balls	Beans
Oats	Macaroni

Warning!

If you have a numb hand, please avoid handling hot, cold and sharp objects. Make sure you use your eyes to help when you can't feel properly.

Please contact your therapist if you have any questions.

Therapist _____ **Phone Number** _____

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