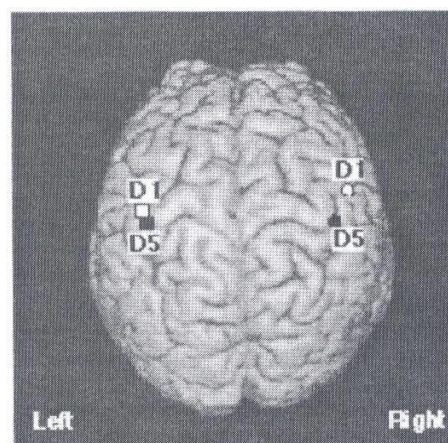
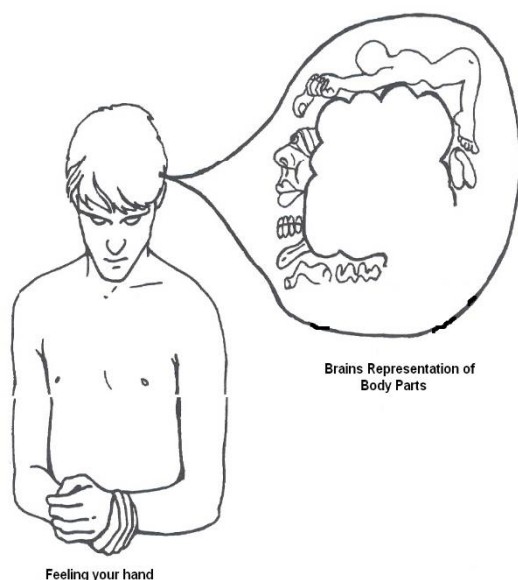


Hand Therapy

Mirror therapy - pain and your brain

- Your brain has billions of nerves and connections.
- How your body parts feel and move is represented in your brain. This can be seen on an MRI with particular parts of the brain being activated.
- This representation in the brain is not equal to the size of the body part. E.g. Hands have more representation in the brain because we feel and use them so much.



D1 (Thumb) and D5 (little finger)
 Brain's representation of the injured or painful hand
 Brain's representation of the uninjured hand

- This brain representation can change. For example, people who use their fingers to read Braille have a larger hand and finger representation in their brain.
- If you have pain or an injury, the representation changes. MRI scans of the brain shows it can become less clear, spread or shrink.
- This is your brain's way of trying to protect you when it feels threatened.
- The good news is that the brain representation can be changed back. Mirror therapy aims to help you with this.



What is mirror therapy?

- Mirror therapy aims to trick your brain into thinking the recovering part is OK.
- The recovering hand is hidden in the box. You see the mirror image of the uninjured hand and your brain thinks your recovering hand is fine.
- The representation of your hand in your brain hopefully should become more normal and your pain should decrease.

Mirror box set-up

- You may use a mirror tile on a box or a mirrored wardrobe door.
- Always aim to position the mirror so that it looks like the hand hidden inside the box is what you can see in the mirror.
- Your therapist will provide you with a separate handout with the exercises you should do with your hand in front of the mirror.



Helpful hints

- Remove watches and jewellery.
- Sit comfortably with the recovering hand in the box, “hidden” from the brain.
- Place your other hand in front of the mirror in the same position.
- Lean forward to look at the image of your other hand in the mirror. Your brain is now “seeing” the recovering hand.
- Your therapist will tell you what to do with your hand in front of the mirror. This may be some of the exercises you are already doing. To have the best effect you should use the mirror often. Aim for at least _____ minutes, _____ times per day. You may have to “build up” the time and how often you use the mirror box.
- **Your pain should not increase.** If your injured hand hurts excessively or sweats you may have gone too quickly. Please tell your therapist.
- If you do not understand this process please tell your therapist. Understanding will assist your recovery.

Please contact your therapist if you have any queries or concerns.

Therapist _____ **Phone Number** _____

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