



REHABILITATION

# Sensory Re-education

Sensory re-education is a way to help you to recover from your hand injury if your nerves have been injured.

Sensory re-education should be carried out 4 to 5 times a day for about 10 minutes each time.

During the first 3 to 6 months following an injury/surgery to the nerve you may have very little feeling in your hand. **It is important to carefully watch the hand when you use it to prevent injury e.g. burns.**

Your therapist will advise you on how to maintain your movement in your hand while you wait for the nerve/s to recover.

## Early Sensory Re-education

### Massage

(Should only be carried out once the scar is completely healed)

- Use a moisturiser such as E45, aqueous cream or Diprobase. This will rehydrate the scar.
- Massage in circles along the scar, horizontally across the scar and over any sensitive areas.
- Massage three to four times daily for at least five minutes for each area.

### Touch

- Touch the areas of the hand that you cannot feel.
- Concentrate on what you are touching. Think about what it would normally feel like.

## Mirror Therapy

Use a mirror, positioned as shown.

The image in the mirror looks like your injured hand, which is actually hidden behind the mirror. When you move your normal hand, and watch the mirror image, your brain starts to believe that it is actually your injured hand that you see moving normally. This has been shown to help recovery after nerve injuries.

- Start by simply looking at the reflection and concentrating for approximately one minute.
- Next slowly start to move your normal hand whilst you watch the mirror image.
- Do this 4-5 times a day for about 10 minutes at a time.

Normal Hand





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### *Later Stages of Sensory Re-education*

#### *Localisation*

- Ask a friend to help you with this. With your eyes closed your friend touches a pencil tip onto the affected area of your hand.
- Try to point to the exact position of the pencil tip with your other hand.
- Open your eyes to check how close you were.
- If you were wrong, place the pencil tip again with your eyes open and concentrate on the feeling.
- Repeat a few times for each affected area of your hand.

#### *Texture and shape discrimination*

- Place a number of objects of different shapes, sizes, weights and textures into a pillowcase.
- Feel for an object in the pillow case with your injured hand – try the larger ones first.
- Concentrate on the feeling and try to identify what it is.
- If you are unsure, place the object in your uninjured hand and concentrate on how it feels.
- Next place the object back onto your injured hand and concentrate on how it feels while you look at it
- Use the same objects several times until you can easily recognise them.