

## Hand therapy department

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# Managing daily activities one-handed

Because of your surgery and/or injury, you may need to manage one-handed for a while. This leaflet lists ways to tackle common tasks to help you adapt.

If you can, you should arrange to stay with someone or have someone stay with you – your hand therapist can give you advice on how long you will need someone to help you.

If you have been given a splint and told to wear it all of the time, do not take it off, however tempting it may be to try to use your hand for everyday tasks.

You should always follow your hand therapist's advice and if you need further information, please do not hesitate to ask your therapist.

### General equipment to help you

- **Non-slip matting.** This is designed to keep items still and in place. You can buy this at large pharmacies and from DIY stores.
- **Small G clamps** will also help to hold equipment in place.

### Self-care

#### Washing/bathing

- You will probably be advised not to allow your splinted/injured hand to get wet. It may help to place your hand inside a plastic bag. There are special covers that you can buy, but a plastic bag should work just as well.
- Remember if you are in a bath or shower whilst you are washing with your uninjured hand, your injured hand will not be available to steady you. Make sure you have a non-slip mat in the shower or bath.
- Use soap on a rope, suction soap holder or pump action soap.
- Use a sponge rather than a flannel, as this is easier to squeeze out one handed.
- Use a long handled back brush, long handled sponge or loofah to enable you to reach your back and both armpits.
- To dry your uninjured arm, wrap a towel round your knees, lean forward and rub your hand and arm against it.
- Use a towelling dressing gown, it will help to dry those hard to reach places.

## **Washing/drying hair**

- Wash over the bath or sink using a shower attachment.
- Partially dry your hair with a towel.
- A cordless hot air brush may be the easiest way to dry your hair.
- If you can afford it, pamper yourself and take more regular visits to the hairdresser for a wash and blow dry.
- Perhaps a change of hairstyle may be easier to manage in the short-term.

## **Shaving**

- Use an electric razor.

## **Ties**

- A tie can be managed one handed. First secure the narrow end in a drawer or between your knees. Then tie the knot with your uninjured hand.
- Wear a clip-on tie.
- Leave the tie tied and loosen it just enough to place over your head and then tighten.
- Consider dressing casually and not wearing a tie for a while.

## **Eating**

- Food can be accidentally scooped off a plate so use a bowl with a raised edge instead.
- Use a non-slip mat to keep the plate still.
- Use a cheese knife – it's a knife and fork in one.

## **Contact us**

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the **hand therapy department** on **020 7188 4172** or **020 7188 4174**, Monday to Friday between 8am and 5pm.

## **Useful sources of information**

### **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

To make comments or raise concerns about the Trust's services, please contact PALS. Ask a member of staff to direct you to the PALS office or:

**e:** 020 7188 8801 at St Thomas' **t:** 020 7188 8803 at Guy's **e:** [pals@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@gstt.nhs.uk)

### **Knowledge & Information Centre (KIC)**

For more information about health conditions, support groups and local services, or to search the internet and send emails, please visit the KIC on the Ground Floor, North Wing, St Thomas' Hospital.  
**t:** 020 7188 3416

### **Language support services**

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch using the following contact details.

**t:** 020 7188 8815 **fax:** 020 7188 5953

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