Contrast bathing

Contrast bathing is a simple but effective treatment to reduce stiffness and swelling of your fingers and provide relief from aches and pains. This leaflet tells you what is involved and how often you should do it. If you have any questions or need further information, please call your hand therapist details below.

What equipment do I need?
- Two bowls (large enough to immerse the affected part of your hand)
- Ice cubes
- Hot and cold water

What do I need to do?
- Fill one bowl with ice cubes and cold water. Fill the other bowl with hand-hot water.
- Immerse the affected area of your hand in the hand-hot water for 30 seconds and then straight away into the cold water for 30 seconds.
- Continue to alternate between the two for five minutes.
- Make sure that the last immersion is always in hand-hot water.

How often should it be done?
You should carry out contrast bathing every day to help to control pain until your hand therapist tells you otherwise.

It will probably be most useful in the morning, but you can carry it out as often as you need to during the day.

Contact us
If you have any questions or concerns about contrast bathing, please contact the hand therapy department, t: 020 7188 4172 or 020 7188 4174, Monday to Friday, 8am-5pm, e: handtherapyappointments@gstt.nhs.uk

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit w: www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets

Language and accessible support services
If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch.
t: 020 7188 8815  e: languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk