Desensitisation – home programme

After an injury or operation, nerves within the skin can sometimes become overly sensitive. Stimulation to the skin in that region of your body, such as touch or pressure, can feel unpleasant, oversensitive and even painful. This leaflet provides you with information about how to help reduce these feelings.

You can reduce these feelings by deliberately overloading the sensitive nerve endings with different stimuli. If you need further information or advice, please do not hesitate to contact your hand therapist.

**Massage**
- Massage the sensitive area for five minutes, every two hours.
- Use a perfume-free moisturiser, such as Nivea or E45 cream, on the area two times a day. This helps to soften the scar line and desensitise that area.

**Different textures (such as velvet, Velcro®, cloth, moleskin, towelling, etc.)**
- Choose a texture that is almost unbearable for you to touch.
- Rub this texture over the area for a few seconds.
- Then choose a texture that is bearable.
- Rub this over the area for two to three minutes, concentrating on feeling the touch rather than the pain.
- Return to your first (unbearable) texture and rub it over the area for two minutes. It should now be more bearable.
- Once the first texture becomes bearable, choose a new unbearable one and continue the process.
- Repeat five times a day.

**Immersion**
- Fill a container with lentils, rice, macaroni, dried beans, or something similar that is only just bearable for you to touch.
- Immerse your finger or hand into the material and work the hand through it for five to seven minutes.
- Once it becomes more bearable, change the texture.
- Repeat five times a day.
Pharmacy Medicines Helpline
If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline.
\textit{t: 020 7188 8748, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm}

Your comments and concerns
For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.
\textit{t: 020 7188 8801 (PALS) \hspace{1cm} e: pals@gstt.nhs.uk}
\textit{t: 020 7188 3514 (complaints) \hspace{1cm} e: complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk}

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.
\textit{t: 020 7188 8815 \hspace{1cm} e: languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk}

NHS 111
Offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day.
\textit{t: 111}

NHS website
Online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you take control of your health and wellbeing.
\textit{w: www.nhs.uk}

Get involved and have your say: become a member of the Trust
Members of Guy’s and St Thomas’ NHS Foundation Trust contribute to the organisation on a voluntary basis. We count on them for feedback, local knowledge and support. Membership is free and it is up to you how much you get involved. To find out more, please get in touch.
\textit{t: 0800 731 0319 \hspace{1cm} e: members@gstt.nhs.uk \hspace{1cm} w: www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/membership}

Was this leaflet useful?
We want to make sure the information you receive is helpful to you. If you have any comments about this leaflet, we would be happy to hear from you, fill in our simple online form, \textit{w: www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets}, or \textit{e: patientinformationteam@gstt.nhs.uk}

\textbf{Contact us}
If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Hand therapy department.
\textit{t: 020 7188 4172 or 020 7188 4174, Monday to Friday, 8am to 5pm}
\textit{e: handtherapyappointments@gstt.nhs.uk}

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