



Thumb CMCJ Replacement

Hand Therapy Patient Information

What is Thumb Carpometacarpal Joint (CMCJ) Replacement?

A CMCJ replacement is an operation to replace the joint at the base of your thumb with an artificial joint. This is usually done to relieve pain in the arthritic joint.

What will happen after the operation?

- You will be put in plaster for about 2 weeks.
- You will then come back to clinic to have the plaster & pins removed if you had them.
- You will be seen by the physiotherapist to begin exercising the thumb and have a splint fitted, which you should wear for approximately 8 weeks after your operation.

Week 2-6

- Wear your splint full-time apart from when performing your exercises
- Start gentle exercises (overleaf) as instructed by your physio.
- Discomfort with exercises and stretches is okay, but try to avoid pain.
- Try to avoid tight gripping, pinching or lifting anything with your operated hand.

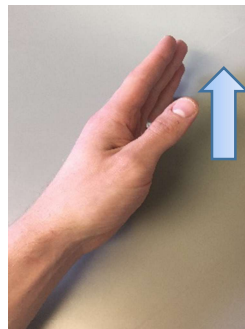
Exercises

Aim to do these every 2 hours. Remove your splint to complete your exercises.

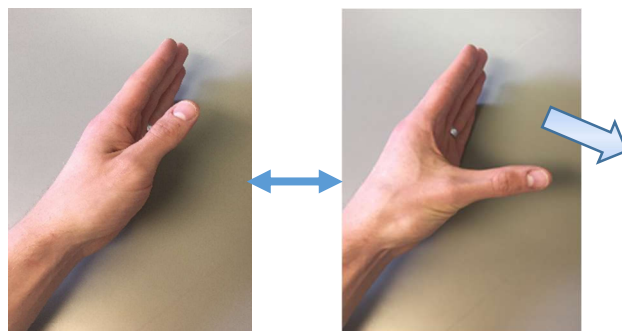
1. Place hand palm down on the table. Slowly move your thumb out to the side, away from your index finger and then back in. Repeat 10 times.



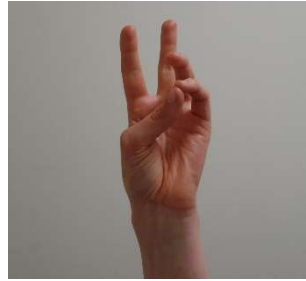
Alternately, this can be done with the hand resting on the side and lifting the thumb towards the ceiling. Then lowering down to the level of your first finger.



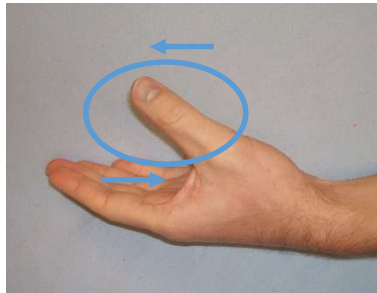
2. Rest the side of your hand on a flat surface. Start with your thumb level with your index finger. Slowly move your thumb sideways (away from the index finger), creating an 'L' shape and then back in. Repeat 10 times.



3. Slowly move your thumb to touch the tip of each finger, starting with your index finger and working across to the little finger. Then, if able, slide your thumb down your little finger before opening your hand to restart. Repeat 10 times.



4. With your palm facing up and the fingers relaxed, gently make a circular movement with your thumb. Repeat 10 times in one direction and 10 times in the opposite direction.



Scar massage

Once your wound/pin sites are dry and healed, you can start scar massage. Initially, get used to touching the scar. Then begin to apply pressure, whilst moving in a circular movement over the scar, ensuring some movement of the skin. You may add a small amount of moisturising cream to rub across and around the scar to keep the skin moving freely. Do this for 3-5 mins, 4 times a day.

Week 6-8

- You can wear your splint less, only putting it on at night time and when using your hand for daily activities.
- It is safe to perform light activities, but you should wear your splint for these activities (e.g. washing up, using cutlery, etc.)

Week 8-12

With guidance from your physio you can...

- Perform strengthening exercises (see below). These exercises should be done **2-3 times a week**, with rest days in between.
- Slowly wean yourself off your splint, though you may still need it for extra support with heavier activities of daily living (e.g. pouring a kettle).
- Increase your use of your thumb/hand for daily activities.
- Return to driving, if you have achieved a comfortable grip.
- Do not push into pain.

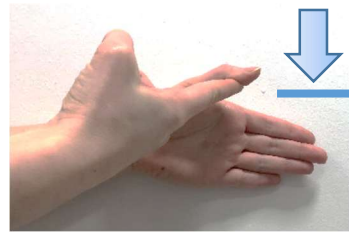
Stage 1 Strengthening exercises (Static exercises)

1. Using your other hand, place a finger against your operated thumb and push into it. Equal the pressure through the thumb so it does not move. Hold for 5-10 seconds. Repeat 5-10 times.

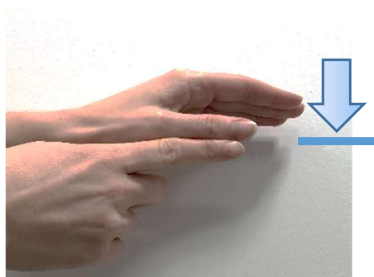
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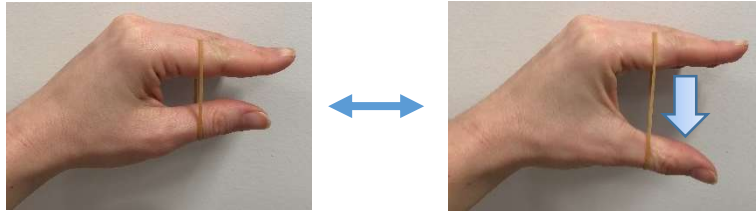
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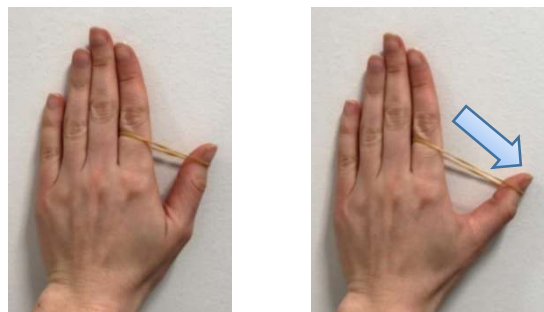
Stage 2 Strengthening exercises (Dynamic exercises)

You can move on to stage 2 once you can do stage 1 exercises easily.

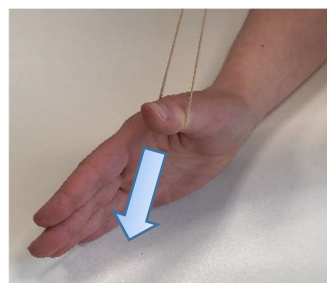
1. Place a thin elastic band around your thumb and index finger (your therapist can supply this). Move your thumb away from your index finger. Hold for 1-2 seconds.



2. Place an elastic band around your thumb and index finger. Keep your hand flat on the table. Move your thumb away from your index finger, stretching the elastic band. Hold for 1-2 seconds.



3. With your hand resting on the side (with little finger at the bottom), apply the band around the thumb. Using your other hand, pull the band up to increase the tension. Then bend your thumb across your palm, as if you are reaching towards the tip of your little finger. Hold for 1-2 seconds and return to the starting position.



Rehab tips for your hand and wrist

- **Warm water exercises** - Once all wounds or pin sites have healed, submerge the affected hand/arm in warm water for 5 minutes and practice the exercises you have been taught.
- **Massage** – Once your wounds are healed, rub into the affected area for 3-5mins, every 2-3 hours. You may wish to use moisturising cream. Massage will help decrease swelling, improve movement, soften scars and de-sensitise the area affected. Your therapist can guide you.
- If you have any open wounds or pin sites, monitor for signs of infection (redness, hot, swollen, burning pain, discharge from wound or feeling feverish). If you have any of these signs then visit your GP or A&E.

If you have any problems, please contact your therapist. Contact details are below.

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