

Hand Therapy

Hand therapy largely employs biomechanical principles and different modalities in the treatment and rehabilitation of the hand after injury.

Hand-related injuries are often caused by trauma, repetitive stress/overuse, wear-and-tear and, in some cases, genetic predisposition.

If left untreated, hand injuries can result in significant loss in one's function and ability to participate in daily activities. Absence of proper knowledge to protect and care for the hand can also cause worsening of certain conditions, leading to symptoms of chronic pain and stiffness.

With the proper intervention and strategies, patients are generally able to regain some functional use of the hand and better participate in valued activities.

How is it treated?

Occupational therapists are the main healthcare professionals providing hand therapy services in NUH. There is close partnership and collaboration with the clinical team of hand surgeons, wound nurses, and plaster/casting specialists at the [Hand & Reconstructive Microsurgery \(HRM\)](#) in the provision of holistic services for patients with hand-related injuries.

What does rehabilitation involve?

Rehabilitation involves improving hand function and equipping the patient with proper knowledge and rehabilitation strategies, thus leading to increased use of the hand and participation in daily activities prior to the injury.

Specific exercises and activities for the hand will be prescribed. Depending on the severity of the injury, compensatory strategies can be incorporated to allow general participation and use of the hand. When necessary, heat, electrical and ultrasound modalities are used to complement the rehabilitative interventions. Other interventions include fabricating thermoplastic splints, regaining function and use of the hand, activity modification and joint protection strategies, a return-to-work programme and ergonomic assessment and advice.

A referral to occupational therapists is usually made by the hand surgeons from the HRM with specific guidelines for rehabilitation. An assessment and evaluation of the hand function and history will be taken at the first clinic visit, before commencing on the rehabilitation programme. Comprehensive treatment plans and goals of treatment will be developed with the patient. Patients are scheduled for regular follow-up visits to monitor their improvement and progress accordingly in their rehabilitation programme.