

Desensitisation (Hand Therapy 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 or painful. This sheet provides you with information about how to help reduce these sensations. This is done by overloading the sensitive nerve endings with different stimuli.

If you need any further information, please do not hesitate to contact your therapist.

Massage

Massage the sensitive area for five minutes, every two hours. Use a white and unscented, such as Nivea or E45 on the area. This helps to soften the scar line and desensitise that area.

Stimulate With Different textures

Stimulate sensitive area with a variety of textures beginning with the softest and least irritating and gradually increasing the coarseness of the texture as tolerance to touch improves.

- Rub each 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 (uncomfortable) 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.

Examples of textures: cotton, wool, cloth, velvet, towel, Velcro.

Immersion

- Fill a number of containers with different particles ranging from least to most irritating (i.e., rice, macaroni)
- Immerse sensitive area into the least irritating container and make small stirring movements, changing direction. Continue for 2 - 3 minutes.
- Remove and place into a different container, one that is just bearable and repeat as above.
- Continue to place the sensitive area into increasingly unbearable containers for 2 - 3 minutes until the sensation becomes intolerable.

Tapping

- Use your fingers of the other hand to tap on the sensitive areas at a rate and pressure that is slightly uncomfortable but tolerable.
- Increase the pressure and speed of tapping as tolerated.
- Do the tapping exercise for about 3 to 5 minutes at a time, minimum of three times a day.

PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) is a service that offers support, information and assistance to patients, relatives and visitors. They can also provide help and advice if you have a concern or complaint that staff have not been able to resolve for you. They can also pass on praise or thanks to our teams.

PALS at King's College Hospital, Denmark Hill, London SE5 9RS

Tel: 020 3299 3601 Email: kch-tr.palsdh@nhs.net

PALS at Princess Royal University Hospital, Farnborough Common, Orpington, Kent BR6 8ND

Tel: 01689 863252 Email: kch-tr.palspruh@nhs.net