



Non-Operative Management of Hand & Wrist Osteoarthritis

1. Activity Modification

- Avoid using hand/wrist for heavy/repetitive tasks for hours at a time. Instead, break longer tasks into several 30-minute activities.

2. Joint Protection

- Splints – wrist braces, arthritis gloves, neoprene sleeves for finger joints – wear for repetitive tasks.
- Tools to assist with activities of daily living. (E.g., Avant jar opener). Your local hand therapist or mobility aid store can recommend options.



Comfort Cool Splint



Pushbrace



Wrist brace

3. Simple Analgesia

- Panadol Osteo can be purchased over the counter and is very effective and safe. It is a higher dose of Panadol that will last longer and can be taken daily with minimal risk of side effect. Dose is 2 tablets up to 3 times per day.

4. Anti-Inflammatories

- Meloxicam (Mobic) and other anti-inflammatories are very effective in controlling the symptoms of osteoarthritis.
- To be most effective, anti-inflammatories should be taken for 5-7 days in a row. This will provide a longer period of symptom relief than if you take them randomly as it decreases the inflammation in your joint more effectively.
- You can also take a single dose of anti-inflammatory before activities that irritate your symptoms e.g., gardening, playing golf, tennis etc. This will mean your joints are less painful during and after these activities.
- The main short term side effect is stomach upset/reflux in the short term. If you have this symptom, stop the medication, and see your GP. You may be able to trial a different medication that does not have this effect on you.
- The main long term side effect is increased blood pressure which is less likely if you are taking the medication as recommended above. It may occur more often in people taking anti-inflammatories every single day.