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Wrist Arthritis Exercise Program

What is this program?

This is a home exercise program designed to help reduce pain and improve function in your wrist. The exercises focus on strengthening the muscles around your wrist to create better stability and allow you to use your wrist with less pain during daily activities.

Important Information

- **Duration:** Perform these exercises **twice daily for 12 weeks**
- **Key principle:** All exercises should be done in a **pain-free manner**
- **Goal:** Improve wrist stability and reduce pain through muscle strengthening

What You'll Need

- Small exercise ball (6-8 inches in diameter)
- Silicone therapy putty (available at therapy supply stores or online)
- Wrist brace (to wear during activities that cause pain)

Your Exercise Program

PART 1: Warm-Up Range of Motion Exercises

Before doing the strengthening exercises, gently move your wrist through its range of motion:

- **Flexion and extension:** Bend your wrist forward and backward
- **Side-to-side movement:** Move your wrist from side to side
- **Rotation:** Rotate your forearm palm-up and palm-down

Do these movements gently and slowly, only as far as comfortable.

PART 2: Strengthening Exercises

The following figure demonstrates the three main exercises:

Exercise A: Ball Exercise (Coordination)

What it does: Trains your wrist muscles to work together for better stability
How to do it:
1. Sit at a table with the exercise ball in front of you
2. Place both hands on the ball
3. Gently press both hands against the ball and hold for 3-5 seconds
4. While maintaining gentle pressure, slowly turn the ball right and left in a pain-free manner
5. **Repeat 10 times**
Key point: Keep movements gentle and controlled

Exercise B: Resistance Exercise (Strength)

What it does: Builds strength in the muscles that stabilize your wrist
How to do it:
1. Use your unaffected (good) hand to provide resistance to your affected wrist
2. Apply moderate resistance in the opposite direction as you try to move your wrist
3. Do this in all directions: up, down, and side-to-side
4. **Keep your wrist in a neutral (straight) position throughout**
5. Hold each position for 3-5 seconds
6. **Repeat 10 times, do 2 sets** (for each direction)
Key point: Your wrist should stay in a neutral position - don't let it bend during the exercise

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Exercise C: Putty Exercise (Grip Strength)

What it does: Strengthens your grip and the muscles around your wrist
How to do it:
1. Hold the therapy putty in your affected hand
2. Squeeze the putty firmly
3. **Very important:** Keep your wrist in a stable, neutral (straight) position the entire time - do not let it bend
4. Hold the squeeze for 3-5 seconds
5. **Repeat 10 times, do 2 sets**
Key point: The wrist must stay straight during this exercise - all the work should come from your hand and fingers

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Additional Recommendations

Wrist Brace

- Wear your wrist brace during activities that cause pain
- You may also wear it at night if pain disrupts your sleep
- The brace helps protect your wrist while the exercises work to strengthen it

What to Expect

- Be patient - it may take several weeks to notice improvement
- Some patients see benefits in 6 weeks, others may need up to 6 months
- Consistency is key - doing the exercises twice daily is important for success
- All exercises should be pain-free; if an exercise causes sharp pain, stop

---Remember

- **Twice daily** for 12 weeks
- **Pain-free movements** only
- **Neutral wrist position** during strengthening exercises
- **Be patient** - improvement takes time
- **Stay consistent** - regular exercise is the key to success

