



# HAND IN HAND REHABILITATION, OT, PC

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## KEEPING YOUR HANDS SAFE DURING YOUR SPRINGTIME ACTIVITIES

### ***Treat Your Hands Right***

*When to seek professional  
help for your hands*

### ***Garden Safely!***

*Avoid these common hand  
injuries this spring*

### ***Share The Love***

*Share the benefits of hand  
therapy with a friend*



# KEEPING YOUR HANDS SAFE DURING YOUR SPRINGTIME ACTIVITIES

Sunny days are just around the corner, which means springtime activities will soon be in full swing. The weather will get warmer, spring cleaning will commence, gardening will pick back up, and people will enjoy more time outside in general. While the warming weather may feel nice and refreshing, it is important to make sure that you are keeping your hands safe during your springtime activities. This is especially crucial if you have a condition that causes you to experience pain in your hands, such as arthritis. For more information on how you can protect your hands in the spring, contact us at Hand In Hand Rehabilitation today!

## HOW CAN I PROTECT MY HANDS?

Depending on the spring activity you are partaking in, there is a lot to consider regarding how you can keep your hands safe. Below are a few tips for protecting your hands and making some common activities easier for you:

### 1. Wear the appropriate gloves.

There are several activities that require the use of gloves, such as washing dishes, cleaning the bathroom, gardening, or working on a car. It is important to make sure you are wearing the correct ones to protect your hands during each activity. Gloves can protect your hands against the harsh chemicals found in cleaning products, and

even the hot water and soaps used to clean dishes. Without gloves, these can strip your skin of natural oils, causing them to become dry or chapped. Wearing a pair of cotton-lined rubber gloves while cleaning can help protect against scalding water and harsh chemicals.

Depending on what your outdoor activities may be, wearing different types of gloves can also be beneficial. The skin on your hands can be affected by both the sun's rays or the materials you're working with, which can cause cuts, abrasions, or blisters. When gardening, weeding, or trimming prickly plants, gloves with long wrists can help keep you protected. Protexgloves can also protect your hands from cuts, bruises, and harmful UV rays. For various activities, gloves can also help soothe arthritic aches if they provide mild compression. However, it is important to make sure that your gloves are not too big or too small, as bigger gloves can allow harmful bacteria to get in, and smaller gloves can decrease dexterity.

### 2. Moisturize regularly.

The sun can cause a lot of damage to the hands, including wrinkles, blisters, and dark spots. By moisturizing your hands every day, you can make sure they stay soft and supple. It is also beneficial to apply sunscreen, approximately 15 minutes before going outside.



## WHEN TO SEEK PROFESSIONAL HELP FOR YOUR HANDS

You should also reapply every hour or so if you plan on being outdoors for a prolonged period of time. This will help prevent against sun damage and will improve the overall condition of your hands.

Different ingredients in moisturizers can benefit your hands in different ways. Oils, such as baby oil, help to keep moisture in and prevent it from evaporating off your skin. Lotions containing urea or lactic acid can help with dry or cracking hands. Those with hyaluronic acid, petrolatum, lanolin, or mineral oil will help your hands retain water. Aloe vera and shea butter can help heal and soothe skin that has been damaged or burned.

### 3. Be careful and use the correct tools.

Exercise caution when using tools with sharp blades, such as shears or pruners. Make sure you are wearing gloves beforehand to provide extra protection to your hands and fingers while using them. Tools that include built-in safety locks are ideal for avoiding accidents. It is also important to make sure that your tools are well-oiled before use, so they can cut easily through branches and shrubbery, thus putting less effort and stress on your own arms and hands.

Make sure to always use a tool when possible, instead of your hands. For example, use a rake or hand shovel when digging, as this will protect your hands from any rusty or sharp objects that may be buried beneath the soil.

### WHAT IF THESE TIPS DON'T WORK?

The hands are a sensitive area of the body that we use all the time. Therefore, it may be difficult to protect them at all times, especially if you are already suffering from arthritis or another condition that is affecting them. At Hand In Hand Rehabilitation, we can provide you with helpful and soothing services to help bring relief to your hands.

Our certified hand therapists can provide care for hands that are damaged, cracked, blistered, or swollen. They can also treat injuries in the muscles, soft tissues, nerves, tendons, or bones of the hand. After your treatments, your hand therapist will also provide useful techniques for avoiding further damage or injury in the future. If your hands are experiencing distress, give us a call today. We'll be more than happy to create a treatment plan that will get your hands feeling comfortable again so you can get back to doing your springtime activities!

***Has your hand pain returned? We can help! Schedule your appointment today to return to living a pain-free life! To book your appointment, call us at 516.333.1481 (Long Island), 212.472.1000 (Manhattan) or visit our website at [HandInHandRehabilitation.com](http://HandInHandRehabilitation.com).***



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# 4 TYPES OF COMMON GARDENING HAND INJURIES

After spending a few hours in your favorite sunhat tending to your garden, you may notice an uncomfortable pressure in your wrist, soreness in your hands, or aching pain shooting up your arm. Here are the hand, wrist, elbow, and arm injuries we see at Hand in Hand to help you determine the primary source of your pain.

**1. Lateral Epicondylitis.** Also known as tennis elbow, lateral epicondylitis occurs when there is a strain in the tendons and muscles of the elbow. Despite its name, this type of injury is not exclusive to tennis players. It also occurs after holding a paintbrush or roller; running a handsaw; or repeatedly using hand tools in the garden. Here's how to pinpoint this gardening injury:

- You're experiencing tenderness or pain around the elbow
- Your forearm muscles may feel tight or sore
- The pain may reach into the middle and ring fingers
- Bending your wrist or holding items with a stiff wrist is painful
- Grasping objects increases the pain

**2. Carpal Tunnel Syndrome.** Carpal tunnel syndrome affects four to 10 million Americans and is possibly one of the most common nerve disorders. Affecting both the hand and wrist, carpal tunnel occurs when the median nerve becomes squeezed within the carpal tunnel, also known as nerve entrapment. This syndrome is often associated with repetitive hand movements such as assembly work, typing on the computer, and—you guessed it—gardening. Here's how to recognize carpal tunnel syndrome:

- Tingling and numbness in the fingers
- Dull pain across these same areas, as if your hand has fallen asleep
- You wake at night experiencing this pain
- Your little finger is unaffected by this pain
- You may experience numbness when gripping items

**3. De Quervain's Tenosynovitis.** Pain in the forearm above the thumb and the wrist can indicate de Quervain's tenosynovitis, which causes inflammation that constricts the movement of the tendons of the thumb. The leading cause of this inflammation is repetitive movements in the hand and thumb. These movements can include grasping, squeezing, wringing, and pinching, all commonly performed when working in the garden. Here's how to recognize de Quervain's tenosynovitis:

- Soreness in the thumb (near the wrist)
- Pain spreading down into the wrist or up into the forearm
- Swelling near the wrist
- Pain when grasping items with the hand and thumb

**4. Stenosing Tenosynovitis.** Also referred to as trigger finger, stenosing tenosynovitis is characterized by a painful, difficult time straightening your fingers. Trigger finger occurs from overuse of the fingers and thumb, including repetitive grasping and gripping activities. Here's how to recognize stenosing tenosynovitis:

- Stiffness in the fingers
- A challenging time straightening the fingers
- Swollen or inflamed fingers
- Pain and soreness in the fingers
- Your fingers may pop when you try to straighten them.

*If you find yourself experiencing any of the symptoms listed above during your Springtime activities, we are here to help! Our custom treatment plans will address your pain, and we may even prescribe a custom brace that can provide the support you need to help reduce the stress on your thumb, hands or wrists, without limiting your motion. Call us at Hand in Hand today for an appointment!*

## GET THE HELP YOU NEED TODAY!



1. Call **516.333.1481** (Long Island) or **212.472.1000** (Manhattan) to talk with your occupational therapist and discuss your pain and symptoms.



2. Your occupational therapist may suggest exercises or precautionary measures to relieve or avoid pain.



3. If further assessment is needed to find the cause of your pain, your therapist can schedule an appointment with you.



## HELP US SHARE THE LOVE!

Share the Benefits of Hand Therapy with a Friend or Loved One!

We appreciate the confidence you place in us and will do our best to help those you refer meet their health and rehab goals. A huge thank you to all of our friends who refer others to us at Hand In Hand Rehabilitation!

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**212.472.1000 (Manhattan)**

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