

HAPPY HANDS

By Paola Feher

Gardening, golfing, bike riding, home renovations and repairs....these summer activities all have one thing in common: they require healthy functioning hands with good grip and a full range of motion. Carpal tunnel syndrome, Dupuytren's contracture, arthritis, and various repetitive stress injuries not to mention general pain, numbness and tingling of the hands, can inhibit our daily activities and put a damper on doing those things we love to do.

Fortunately, there are some simple exercises that can help mitigate pain and return our hands to healthy functioning (see figures 1-3).

Figure 1: Open your hand as much as possible. Hold open for 6 breaths. Rest. Repeat twice on each hand.

Figure 2: On a low table, or on the floor (you'll have to kneel if you do it on the floor) position your hand with the fingertips facing towards your body and your palm facing up. Lean far forward and keep your elbow straight. With your wrist planted firmly on the table (or floor), begin to move your body back, keeping your elbow straight. You will feel a stretch in your elbow, forearm, wrist and/or hand.

Figure 3: Same as Figure 2 but this time the palm is facing down. Repeat as with Figure 2.

Hands contain many small bones that are activated by an equal number of muscles. If the bones become compressed, the nerves between them will be compromised, and pain ensues. Our goal with these stretches is to keep the muscles resilient, the bones separated from one another, and the pathways of the nerves, blood



and lymph open and free. It is possible, with repetitive motion over time, for fingers and/or joints to become misaligned. If this is the case, then a realignment will need to take place in order for pain to go away and for your hands to become happy again. Deep muscular work is the best cure. Try the above

exercises. Hold each position for 6-10 breaths on each hand. If after doing the exercises once daily for a week symptoms do not get better, then you will need to consult a professional who can determine if manual work needs to be done to eliminate pain, or perhaps deeper exercises need to be prescribed.

This article outlines some preliminary exercises and ideas. If you would like to learn more, or if you are suffering from hand/wrist/elbow pain or numbness, I can be reached at 586-7529 or www.bozemanhealingarts.com

Paola Feher founded Bozeman Center for the Healing Arts in 1997 after receiving her master's degree in biomechanics. Her training emphasized observation of human bodies in motion, focusing on performance, injury prevention and rehabilitation. Paola is certified by the Yoga Alliance (E-RYT 500), is a licensed massage therapist (LMT), and specializes in the treatment of chronic pain and injury rehabilitation. Paola can be contacted at www.bozemanhealingarts.com

Figure 1



Figure 2

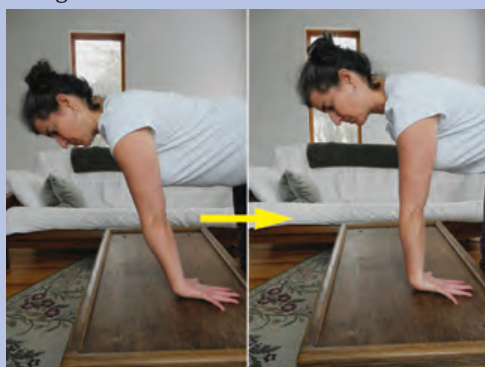


Figure 3

