

## Introduction

Dupuytren's contracture is a condition that affects the hand and causes one or more fingers (usually ring and/or little fingers) to bend upwards, "pulling" towards the palm. It is often difficult to straighten the affected fingers.

There can also be lumpy "nodules" in the palm of the affected hand over which calluses often form.

## What causes Dupuytren's Contracture?

The exact cause of Dupuytren's Contracture is unknown, but it has been linked to:

- Smoking
- Excessive alcohol intake
- Genetics/family history
- Diabetes
- Epilepsy
- Jobs that involve exposure to Hand Transmitted Vibration

## What can I do to help manage symptoms?

1. Wear gloves for physical work
2. Reduce alcohol intake
3. If you smoke, try to stop
4. Eat a healthy diet
5. Undertake targeted exercises such as:

### Finger lifts

In one of the simplest exercises, you can lay your palm flat on a smooth surface, like a table or desk. Next, practice raising each finger one at a time, pausing after each raise for a few seconds. You can repeat this exercise several times per day.

### Finger spreads

With your palm on a flat surface, you can also stretch your fingers by spreading them wide and drawing them back in together.

### Palm raises

Another exercise involves leaving your fingers flat on a surface while raising and lowering only your palm.

### Hand press

You can also try different exercises without a flat surface. First, place your hands in a prayer position. Then, gently push the palms and fingers of both hands together.

### Finger bends

Another option is holding your hands in front of you, bending the first two joints of the fingers down and straightening them.

## What if I believe that my symptoms have been caused by, or made worse by work?

This condition is frequently seen amongst employees that undertake "heavy", manual work. This is not to say that work is the cause, but certain types of work may encourage symptoms to get worse more quickly.

If you believe that your symptoms have been caused by your job, if your work seems to be making things worse, or if you are struggling with work because of the pain and discomfort that this condition may cause, you should bring this to the attention of your employer and/or your Occupational Health Practitioner.

## What if these suggestions don't help?

For moderate or severe symptoms, or for mild symptoms that do not respond to self-care, then you should seek review with your family doctor (GP) or some other Healthcare Professional such as a Physiotherapist.

## What treatments are Available?

### Fasciectomy

The affected tissue in the hand is removed with surgery.

### Needle fasciotomy

A needle is used to make small cuts in the affected tissue.

### Dermofasciectomy

Surgery is used to remove the affected skin and tissue.

### Collagenase Injections

Injections that break up the hard lump tissue

## Special Considerations

There is some evidence to suggest that substantial exposure to HAV may cause symptoms. More evidence can be found on the DWP's website:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-industrial-injuries-disablement-benefit-for-dupuytren's-contracture>

Further information may be found here:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/dupuytren's-contracture/>

A copy of this leaflet may be downloaded from:

<https://mohs.co.uk/resources/>

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## Dupuytren's Contracture A Guide for Employees



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