

New York AgrAbility Project

Tip Sheet

Promoting Success in Agriculture for People with Disabilities and Their Families

Joint protection

Occupational therapy joint protection principles

- **Respect pain**

Pain that lasts more than 2 hours indicates joint damage.
Fear of pain results in inactivity and loss of motion and strength.
Disregard for pain results in joint damage and pain.

- **Maintain muscle strength and joint range of motion**

Achieve full range of each joint while performing your daily activities.
Perform specific exercises and range-of-motion activities.
Loss of range of motion and strength = loss of function.

- **Wear splints and/or braces**

Protect and provide rest to very weak or unstable joints.
During activity, provide external stability to an unstable joint.

- **Avoid positions of deformity**

- **Avoid a tight grasp**

Don't carry heavy handbags, pails, and bags by the handle.
Hold everything no tighter than necessary.
Release tight grasp frequently if you have to use it.
Use built-up handles on writing utensils, pot handles, tools, etc.
Use adaptive equipment such as jar openers.

- **Avoid pressure against the radial side of each finger (thumb side)**

Don't rest your chin on the side of your fingers.
Add levers to keys, handles, and knobs.
Hold handles straight across the palm.



- **Avoid pressures against the backs of your fingers**

This occurs when you push up from a chair using a closed fist or rest your chin on the backs of your fingers. Use your palms while holding your fingers straight.

- **Avoid strong and constant pressure against the pad of your thumb**

The thumb is necessary for 40 percent of hand activities!
Hold objects as lightly as possible.
Use enlarged, built-up handles.
Eliminate activities where possible.
Type instead of writing with pen or pencil.

- **Avoid prolonged periods of holding the same position**

Sit if the task takes more than 10 minutes.
Stand up after sitting for 20-30 minutes.
Reposition yourself often.

A portion of the information is shared from: <http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Prairie/5309/arth6.html>.