

# Edema Management

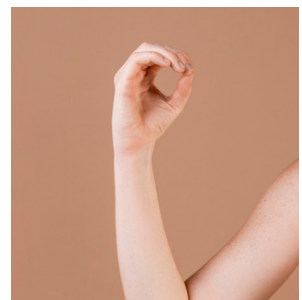
## Edema

Edema is swelling caused by too much fluid trapped within the body's tissues. Edema is the body's response to healing after an injury from a fracture or after a surgical procedure.



## What Can Happen to Your Hand?

Symptoms of hand edema may include an increase in the size of the hand, painful and stiffness of the finger joints. If edema is not well managed, restricted movements of the fingers or wrist may result, affecting your ability to perform simple daily activities.



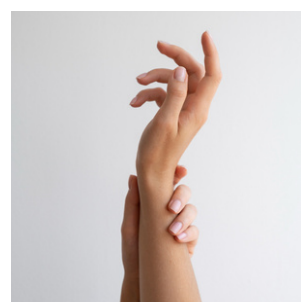
## How Can a Hand Occupational Therapist Help You?

A hand occupational therapist will assess your hand edema and will educate you on the best position to place your hand and exercises to reduce swelling and maintain flexibility of your joints.



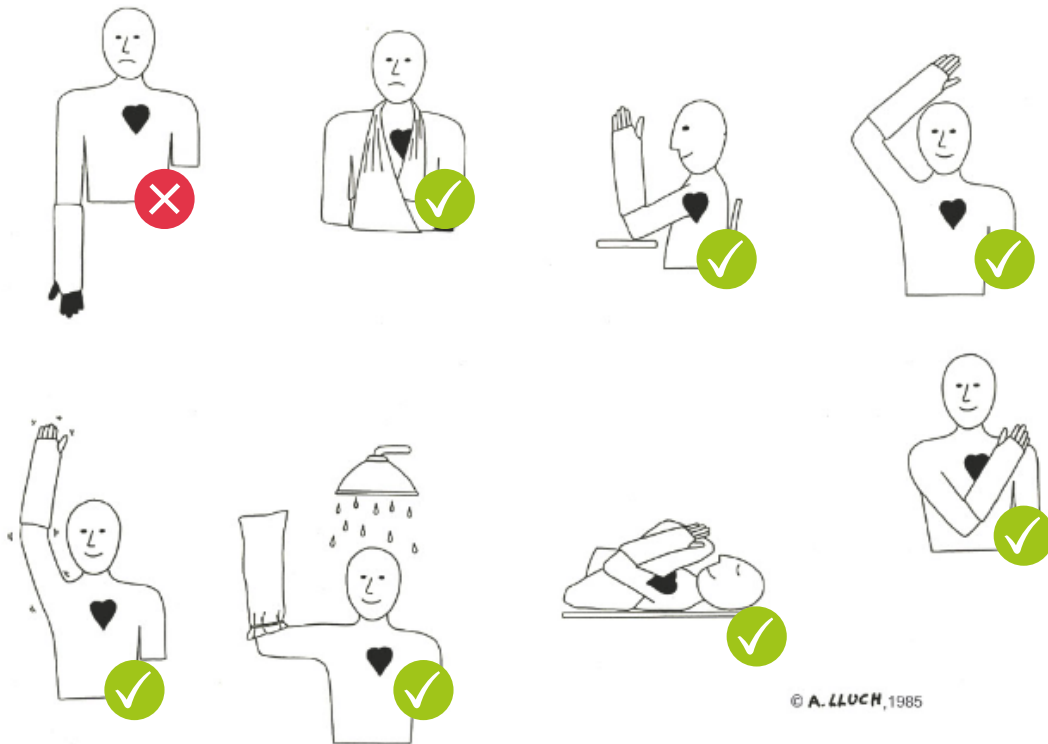
## Retrograde Massage

Retrograde massage consists of manually moving edema away from the hand. Have your hand slightly elevated and apply gentle downward strokes on the back of your hand from your fingertips and past the elbow.



## Elevation

Keep your hand elevated. Elevating your hand will allow gravity to drain the swelling. You can place your hand on a pillow or a cushion (above your heart) when you are sleeping or sitting. Avoid wearing an arm sling for long periods and at night as it will prevent the natural draining of edema, which can further result in swelling and joint stiffness.



## Active Movement

Active movement of your fingers allows your muscles to produce a natural pumping action that will help decrease the swelling. To optimise the reduction of edema, raise your hand above your head and make a tight fist and then straighten them. It is also important for you to move your elbow and shoulder as well.



Contributed by Occupational Therapy, Rehabilitation, Allied Health Services

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