

Paraffin wax hand therapy

<https://kingstonhospital.nhs.uk/information/paraffin-wax-hand-therapy>

This is for anyone coming to the Occupational Therapy department to have paraffin wax therapy on their hands.

What is paraffin wax therapy?

Paraffin wax is a soft wax that melts at a low temperature. This means it does not cause burns or blisters to the skin.

Paraffin wax therapy is a kind of heat therapy. Evidence shows that it can be beneficial for people with some conditions that affect their hands.

What are the benefits of wax therapy?

Wax therapy can help to relax muscles and reduce stiffness in the joints. It does this by warming the connective tissues of the joints. Warming the connective tissues can improve the hand's range of movement.

Wax therapy can also help soften the skin and may reduce swelling.

What are the risks of wax therapy?





Side effects from wax therapy are rare.

A small number of people may develop a temporary heat rash following wax therapy.

If you have sensitive skin, you may develop some mild swelling or breakouts (spots).

You may not be able to have wax therapy if any of the following apply to you

If any of the following apply to you, you may not be able to have wax therapy:

	You are experiencing symptoms of illness such as influenza or stomach bug. You need to be free of symptoms for at least 48 hours before attending your appointment.
	You have any open or newly healed wounds, cuts, abrasions (scraped skin), or ulcers.
	You have infectious skin conditions or are experiencing a flare up of skin conditions, for example psoriasis or eczema.
	Your joints feel hot to the touch, for example if you are experiencing a flare up of rheumatoid arthritis.



You are allergic to paraffin wax.

→ **Tell your therapist** if any of the above apply to you because wax therapy may not be suitable for you at the moment.

How do I prepare for my treatment?

Before treatment, you must:

- cut your nails short
- remove all nail varnish
- remove false or acrylic nails
- remove all rings and watches from the hand that is to be treated
- check your skin for newly healed wounds, cuts, abrasions (an area of scraped skin) or ulcers. We cannot treat you if these are present.

→ **Tell your therapist** if you have any newly healed wounds, cuts, abrasions (an area of scraped skin) or ulcers on the hand that is to be treated.

What happens during my treatment?

- The therapist will ask you to wash and dry your hands.
- They will dip your hand into a large container of warm wax. They will do this 4 times.
- Each time they will lift your hand out and wait for 2 to 3 seconds while the wax sets. This will create a waxy glove.
- During the process you must not touch the sides or bottom of the wax container. You must not move your fingers apart.
- The therapist will cover your hand with a plastic bag and wrap it in a towel. This insulates the hand.
- The wax will stay on for 20 minutes.
- After 20 minutes, the therapist will remove the towel and plastic bag. They will peel the wax back towards your fingers. It will slide off mostly in one piece.
- The hand therapist will massage your hand. They will also do a variety of hand exercises with you.

What happens after my treatment?

After your treatment, the therapist will discuss your case and give you some hand exercises to do at home. If necessary, they will book your next appointment.

After treatment, you can use your hand as normal. You can continue with your usual daily activities and do the hand exercises which the therapist will give you.


If you wish to continue with wax therapy once your course of wax therapy is complete, ask your therapist about buying a wax bath to use at home. You can also speak to your therapist about alternatives to paraffin wax therapy.

Contact your therapist if you experience any worrying effects after your appointment.

Contacts

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Accessibility	Please contact the Patient Experience Team on 020 8934 3850 if you need this information in a different format. For information accessibility please visit Kingston Hospital AccessAble www.accessable.co.uk/kingston-hospital-nhs-foundation-trust
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