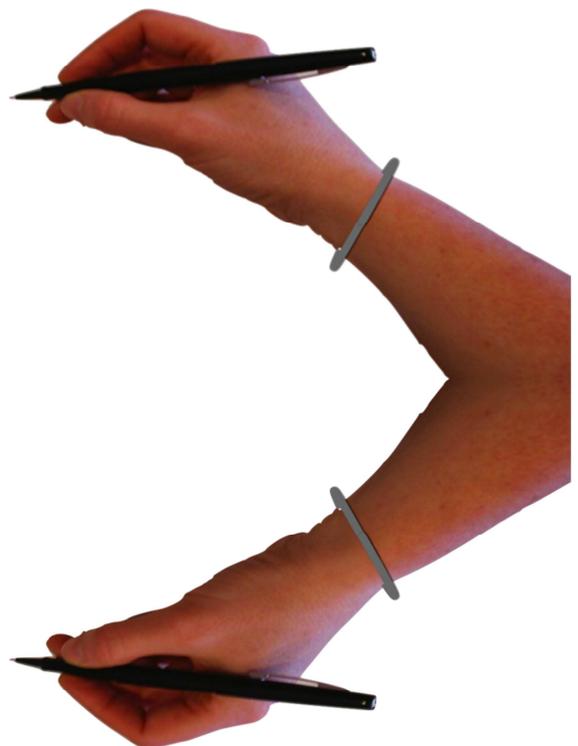


# Mirror Therapy

**Physiotherapy / Hand Therapy  
Community & Therapy Services**

**This leaflet has been designed to  
give you important information  
about your condition and ways to  
manage it.**



# Information for patients and visitors

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## Introduction

This leaflet has been designed to give you information and act as a reminder of the techniques you have been taught to manage your condition. The guidelines should only be used following consultation with your Hand Therapist.

## What is mirror visual feedback?

Mirror therapy has been found to be useful in the treatment of Amputee phantom limb pain and Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS).

We feel pain due to a series of complicated responses in the body. This means that people often benefit from different treatments or a combination of treatments.

It is thought that the mirror helps by “tricking” the brain into believing that the painful limb is now normal, through looking at the reflection of the unaffected limb. Over time, this will help to correct the messages to the brain and therefore reducing pain and allowing movement to increase.

## What should I do?

Mirror visual feedback should become part of your planned exercises programme.

Follow the instructions below 4 – 5 times each day or as directed, but only use the mirror for brief periods of time (maximum 10 minutes) or until you feel unable to concentrate. It is preferable to use it a little and often.

Like any new technique, it will require practice and may need several trials before you feel comfortable with it:

- Find a quiet room where you will be able to concentrate and not be interrupted
- Ensure that you are seated in a comfortable position with your back well supported
- Position the mirror so that the reflective surface is facing your unaffected hand and your affected hand is hidden behind the mirror so you are unable to see it



# Information for patients and visitors

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## Exercises

1. Lean forward so that you can see the mirror image of your unaffected hand in the mirror and look at this reflection **WITHOUT MOVING** either hand.

Concentrate hard on the mirror reflection for a minimum of 2 minutes.

Once you are comfortable with this, progress to exercise 2.

2. Try moving only your unaffected hand for a couple of minutes; whilst you are still looking at the reflection in the mirror and **IMAGINE** that the affected hand is moving in the same way. It does not matter which movements you choose to perform or they may have been prescribed by your therapist.

Once you are comfortable with this, progress to exercise 3.

3. Choose a non-painful movement or exercises to perform, then **SLOWLY** start to move **BOTH** hands in **EXACTLY** the same way whilst still looking at the reflection in the mirror. It may help to have someone present whilst you practice initially to tell you that you are performing the movements the same in both hands.

4. Progress to different / more difficult movements or exercises as instructed by your Therapist.

If movement of your affected hand is too painful, then return to exercise 2. If pain or stiffness worsen whilst you are exercising, then stop and return to exercises 1 or 2. You may be able to gradually return to the more difficult exercises later.

## Remember

- **Do not use the mirror for prolonged periods as your concentration levels will drop**
- Always move the affected and unaffected hands in the same way

## Benefits

Improved movement in the affected area.

## Risks

Occasionally it has been reported that some unusual sensations in the hand that is hidden from view. They may be that it feels heavier or lighter, warmer or colder or it feels to be "floating" This is not a problem and is quickly resolved by stopping the particular exercise and watching both hands without the mirror and the sensation will pass.

## Contact Details for Further Information

Your Therapist is: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact number: \_\_\_\_\_



# Information for patients and visitors

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## References

British Association of Hand Therapists.

Chartered Society of Physiotherapists.

## Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service offers confidential advice, support and information on any health related matters.

If you have a comment, concern, complaint or compliment about the care or service you have received from the Trust you can contact the PALS team as follows:

Telephone: 03033 306518

Email: [nlq-tr.PALS@nhs.net](mailto:nlq-tr.PALS@nhs.net)

There are also offices at both the Diana Princess of Wales Hospital (near the main entrance) and Scunthorpe General Hospital (on the C Floor, near the outpatient department), should you wish to visit.

**Please note: PALS should not be contacted for clinical advice relating to the content of this leaflet. The service should be contacted directly in the first instance.**

## Northern Lincolnshire and Goole NHS Foundation Trust

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