

Wrist stretch:

Place one hand beneath the fingers of the other and gently but firmly press back to stretch the wrist. Hold for 10 seconds; repeat 5 times. Do this every hour when possible.



Declare a Rest

Take frequent breaks. Try these exercises

- With fingers interlaced behind your head, gently stretch your elbows back. Hold for 10 seconds.
- Shrug your shoulders. Hold for 10 seconds. Repeat 3 times.
- With fingers interlaced behind your back and arms straight back, gently hold for 10 seconds.

When exercising, breathe deeply through the diaphragm.

Damage Control

Pain in your hand, wrist, arm, or shoulder is a sign that you need to rest or to vary your activities. You may need to seek advice from an occupational therapist. To temporarily relieve discomfort:

- Rest your hand wherever and whenever you can.
- Try gentle stretching exercises to increase circulation and relieve tension.
- If you have persistent pain, numbness, or tingling, contact your doctor and see an **occupational therapist**.

See: www.nzaot.com
(Find an Occupational Therapist)

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N Z A O T
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Trust is built on a handshake

SHAKE and SMILE

Tips from occupational therapists about surviving handshaking



The New Zealand Association of
Occupational Therapists (Inc.)

The occupation of standing for public office always involves the occupational task of hand shaking – the higher the office the more shaking!

At the end of a long day you may find yourself in pain with stiffness in your hands, arms, neck, and back and dreading that crushing grip from an over enthusiastic well-wisher.

On behalf of our over 900 members, The New Zealand Association of Occupational Therapists (NZAOT) offers you the following suggestions for preventing pain, discomfort or injury associated with repeated handshakes.

Occupational therapists are registered health professionals who are expert in preventing and treating gradual process injuries resulting from the occupation of campaign handshaking.

Occupational therapy enables people to identify and overcome the barriers that prevent them from participating in the activities that they need or want to do within their homes and communities.

Keep in Shape to Go the Distance

Shaking many hands, with fewer negative consequences, can best be achieved when you are in good physical condition:

- Include some cardiovascular exercise into your daily schedule: a brisk walk, swim or jog
- Do shoulder shrugs and back stretches between speeches and at the end of the day.

Positioning Is Everything

Prevent problems by checking your posture and the placement of your hands and arms:

- Initiate the handshake so you have a firm lock on the other person's hand; hold your wrist straight as you position the "web" space between your thumb and index finger firmly against the corresponding space in the other person's hand.
- Shake from the arm, not the wrist.
- Break the handshake and relax your arm by the side of the body, allowing the muscles of the shoulder, arm and hand to completely relax.
- When possible, use a two-handed shake. Placing your left hand over the back of the other person's hand distributes the pressure more evenly.

Take Care of Important Allies

Your back and shoulders are important components of a handshake:

- Keep your elbow at 90-degrees
- Let your arms hang loose beside your body.
- Keep your shoulders low and relaxed.
- Turn your entire body when moving to shake a hand. Avoid turning from your waist.

Exercise Your Hand

Increase hand strength both before you begin the election campaign, and during rare free moments.

- Stretch and flex your hands while on the podium waiting to speak.
- Keep a foam ball or hand gripper in your election office and car. Build up your hand muscles while on the phone
- Warm up your hand first thing in the morning - before the first handshake - with these exercises.

Full-Fist Exercise:

Open and close hands fully, squeezing into a fist 10 times slowly (over a 10-second period); repeat every hour if you can.

