OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY
Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital
Fort Polk, LA 71459
Front Desk: (337) 531-3305

Contrast Baths

One method of reducing swelling in your hand and wrist is using a contrast bath. Alternating between warm and cold temperatures promotes dilation and constriction of the blood vessels. This helps "pump" the inflammatory cells and swelling out of the hand and wrist. Move your hand and wrist while soaking to stimulate circulation and pain reduction.

Procedure:

- Prepare one pan of warm water.
- Prepare one pan of cool water.
- Alternate immersing your hand and wrist into the warm and cool water as follows:

WARM WATER
(Approx. 100-111° degrees)

COOL WATER
(Approx. 50-65° degrees)

WARM	COOL	WARM	COOL	WARM	TOTAL
3 min	1 min	3 min	1 min	3 min	11 min

- While in the water, gently bend and straighten your fingers.
- The cycle continues for 11 minutes, with the last immersion in the warm basin.
- Perform the contrast bath 2-3 x/day, after painful activities, and always before bed.

Note: These times do not have to be used, but typically a ratio of 3:1 or 4:1 hot/cold is used. If adverse reactions are noticed, stop treatment and tell your therapist.