

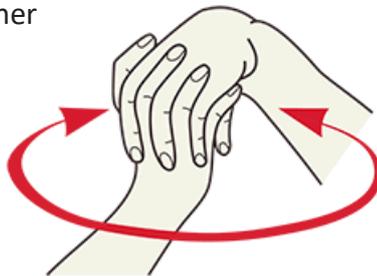
Exercises for Fiber Artists

Stretches for Wrists and Hands

The repetitive motions required for knitting, crocheting, and even manipulating the weft and beater for weaving can create weakness and stiffness in your wrists and fingers. Hand and wrist exercises that can be done easily sitting at your bench or on a chair or couch can strengthen your wrists and keep your hands and fingers flexible. They may even reduce or prevent pain or injury.

- *Wrist rolls*

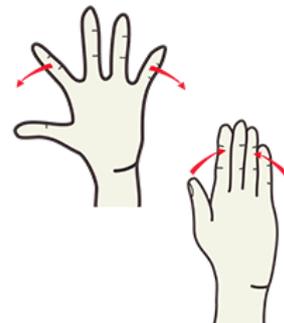
Clasp your hands together in front of your chest, holding your elbows close together. Keeping the fingers interlaced, begin to circle the hands at the wrists in one direction about 10 times. Repeat in the other direction.



- *Open/Close Fingers*

Spread your fingers wide and hold for a second. Bring your fingers back together. Repeat 5 times.

Variation: Spread your finger wide and hold. Then ball your fingers into a fist and hold for a second. Repeat 5 times.



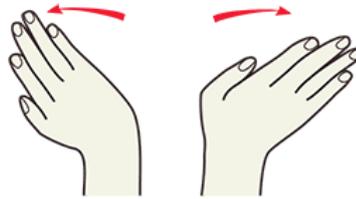
- *Wrist bending*

Extend your arms out in front of you, then bend your wrists back, bringing your fingers straight up. Hold for 10 seconds. Then bend your wrists down and point your fingers to the floor, holding for another 10 seconds.



- *Wrists side-to-side*

Extend your arms out in front of you, palms facing down. Rotate your wrists side-to-side 5 times. Keeping your arms extended, flip your palms over to face up. Rotate your wrists side-to-side 5 times.



- *Bent fingers*

Extend one arm out in front of you, palm up. Using the other hand, gently bend the fingers of the extended hand back toward your body. Repeat on the other side.

Extend the first arm out in front of you, palm facing down. Using the other hand, gently bend the fingers of the extended hand back toward your face. Repeat on the other side.

Variation: Bend each finger back separately.



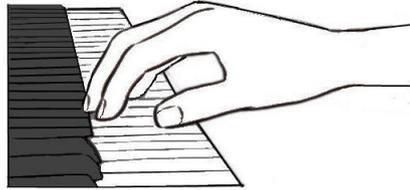
- *Finger touch*

Extend one arm out in front of you, with palm facing up. Bring your thumb to touch your forefinger, then repeat for each finger on that hand. Repeat exercise for the other hand.



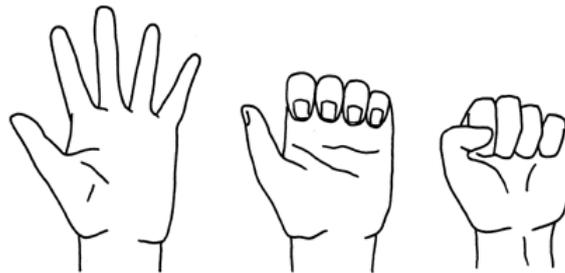
- *Playing the piano*

Extend both arms out in front of you, positioning your hands as if you were going to play the piano (fingers bent, hands cupped). Move your fingers up and down rapidly. At the same time, bring your extended arms out and to the side, then back into the center. Repeat 5 times. Try not to bring your shoulders up to your ears as you move your arms.



- *Fingers to palms*

With your arms extended in front of you and your palms facing out, spread your fingers wide. Now bend your fingers in toward your palms, bending only the first joint, then the second joint, until the tips of your fingers meet your palm. Re-extend your fingers and spread them wide. Repeat 5 times.



- *Squeeze a ball*

Using a ball of a size that will fit within your palm (e.g., a stress ball or tennis ball), gently squeeze the ball and relax your fingers multiple times. Repeat with the other hand.



Tip for Knitters: If your wrists get sore after knitting for long periods of time with straight needles, try using circular needles instead. Using circular needles results in a slight difference in wrist position that could make a big difference in your comfort when knitting.