

# Base of Thumb Osteoarthritis



# Introduction

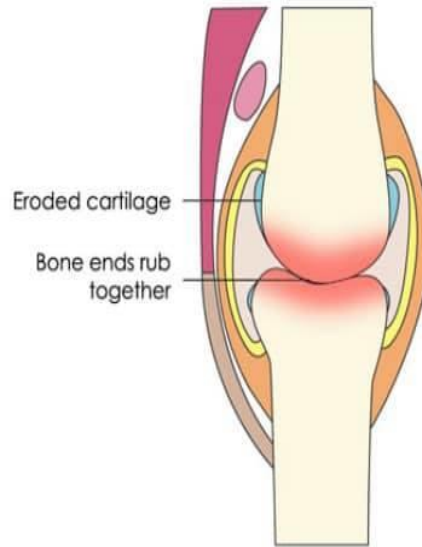
- Thank you for coming to the Base of Thumb Osteoarthritis class.
- We hope you take away some useful information.
- Questions are welcome.
- If you would like to talk to a therapist about your specific symptoms or concerns, we will be happy to speak with you at end of the class. 😊

# What is Osteoarthritis?

NORMAL JOINT



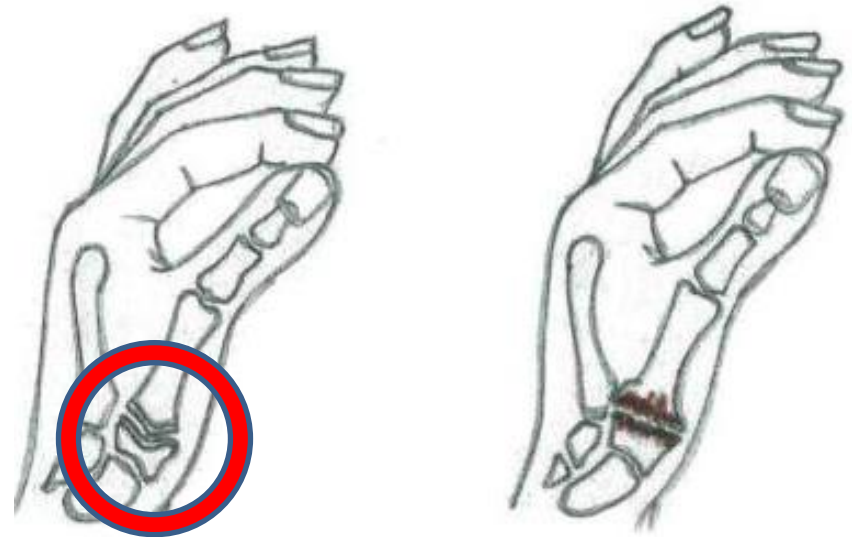
OSTEOARTHRITIS



- Osteoarthritis or OA is a condition that affects your joints.
- It is associated with wear and tear, and is usually age related.
- The smooth lining of the joint (cartilage) gradually thins and roughens, and extra bone can develop in the joint.
- The joint can become swollen, and change shape and/or positioning.

# The Base of your Thumb

- This joint is the first joint of the thumb.
- It connects your long thumb bone with a wrist bone called the Trapezium.
- The medical name for it is the Carpo-metacarpal joint or CMCJ!
- This joint allows you to pinch and oppose with your thumb. One of the big differences between us and other primates!
- It is highly mobile in all directions, and takes large forces through it when you grip.
- This is why it is prone to wear and tear.



# Symptoms

- Pain! This can be a dull ache, a sharp shooting pain or anything in between. It can be constant or up and down.
- Swelling. Your bodies response to try and heal the joint.
- Change in positioning or shape of the joint. As the joint surface changes, stability reduces. An imbalance of the muscle force can change the 'pull' on the joint.
- This picture is of the 'Shoulder sign' we sometimes see with this condition.
- Stiffness.
- Weakness in the thumb.



# Outlook

- Osteoarthritis is a long-term condition and cannot be cured, but it doesn't necessarily get any worse over time and it can sometimes gradually improve.
- Self management of mild to moderate symptoms can make a big difference.
- If your symptoms are severe, we can discuss other options such as Steroid injections or surgery.

# Self Management – Things to try

- **Heat: apply a wheatbag/waterbottle/hotwater.**
- **Cold or ice, over a tea towel, for 20 mins.**
- **Pain relief: speak to your GP or pharmacist about suitable options for you. Tablets, creams or gels are available.**
- **General thumb exercises: evidence shows that gentle exercise helps OA joints.**
- **Splints: various types available. Can be 'off the shelf' or moulded for you (needs referral).**
- **Helps with stiffness and pain.**
- **Helps with reducing inflammation if you've over done it.**
- **Helps with..pain! There may be side effects though.**
- **Improves muscle strength and stability in the joint. We will do these together.**
- **These can reduce movement and loading on the joint, when you are using your hands.**

# Treatment continued..

- **Joint protection techniques:  
Different ways of doing your daily activities.**
- **Pacing: spread out the tricky jobs.**
- **Self massage around the joint and at a trigger point (see sheet).**
- **Some people report that a change of diet or taking certain supplements has helped them. There is little solid evidence for these, but if you are interested you can do some research.**
- **See [Vesusarthritis.org](http://Vesusarthritis.org) for more ideas and lots of information.**
- **Reduces the load on your joint, reduces further wear and tear.**
- **Gives your joint time to recover from hard work, and helps to prevent 'flare ups'.**
- **Reduces tension in the surrounding muscles.**



# Thank you for listening!

**Any questions?**

**We will now go through the exercises on your sheet, and look at splints and gadgets.**