



ERGONOMIC STRATEGIES-PERSONAL DIGITAL ASSISTANTS (PDAs)

What is Blackberry Thumb?

- Blackberry Thumb is a repetitive stress injury caused by overuse of a handheld device with no one set of symptoms or one specific diagnosis.
- Symptoms can include swelling, hand throbbing, muscle cramps, numbness, and pain that can become chronic if not addressed.
- Because a PDA keyboard is so small, and the thumb, which is the least dexterous part of the hand, becomes overtaxed, the risk of injury skyrockets with over use.

What can I do to Prevent Blackberry Thumb or Improve Current Symptoms?

1. Tips for preventing Blackberry Thumb include:
2. Be selective in answering e-mails and text messages on hand-held devices.
3. Use abbreviations when text messaging and typing e-mails.
4. Type on handheld devices for no more than ten minute sessions.
5. Try to avoid typing with your thumbs, and use other fingers to type.
6. Stretch the hands during typing sessions to enhance blood flow to the thumb muscles.

Some quick and easy exercises you can do:

1. Tap each finger with the thumb of the same hand. **(Repeat 5 times)**
 2. Alternate tapping your palm and back of your hand against your thigh as quickly as you can. **(Repeat 20 times)**
 3. Open up your hands and spread fingers as far apart as possible. Hold for ten seconds. **(Repeat 8 times).**
 4. Fold your hands together; turn your palms away from your body as you extend your arms forward. You should only feel a gentle stretch. Hold for ten seconds. **(Repeat 8 times).**
 5. Fold your hands together; turn your palms away from your body and extend your arms overhead. You should feel the stretch in your upper torso and shoulders to hand. Hold for ten seconds. **(Repeat 8 times).**
- Take personal responsibility; seek a physical therapist's care if symptoms persist.

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