

Rheumatoid Arthritis?

The SARAH program can help your
hand strength & function

What is SARAH?

Strengthening And Stretching for Rheumatoid Arthritis of the Hand

The **SARAH program** is an evidence based, clinically tested, rheumatoid arthritis management program for individuals struggling with hand and wrist based **rheumatoid arthritis**.

With the assistance of a certified SARAH therapist (physiotherapist or occupational therapist), individuals progress through set levels of exercises to maintain and improve function.

Why is it important?

- Rheumatoid arthritis is the most common autoimmune disease in Australia. It causes joint pain, stiffness, swelling, and muscle weakness.
- Medication can ease RA symptoms, but patients may still have difficulty with everyday tasks. Over time, inactivity leads to muscle wasting and reduced hand function.
- The SARAH programme has clinically shown to improve strength and fine motor coordination of the hands.

What's involved?



Step 1

Assessment and management strategies education session



Step 2

5 x one-on-one SARAH exercise prescription and review sessions



Step 3

Review of progress and patient goals

About the SARAH program

In the initial session, the SARAH certified therapist and client work collaboratively to **identify goals** for recovery and exercises which are both appropriate and challenging.

Treatment is specific and targeted to each individual and ensures exercises can be completed effectively and **pain free**.

Follow up sessions involve ensuring exercises are being completed effectively, progression is being tracked, exercises are being upgraded and most importantly, goals are being achieved.

Structured sessions help individuals establish routines and increase success with rheumatoid arthritis management once the program is completed.

Successful outcomes

Recent comparative studies¹ have shown:

- Patients that completed SARAH in addition to usual RA care reported **double the improvement in hand function**.
- Exercise improves general muscular endurance and strength *without* negative effects on pain or disease progression.
- Exercises completed in the SARAH program did not result in any adverse events such as increased pain, stiffness or 'flare-ups'.
- An exercise program can improve daily living function and confidence to self-manage symptoms.

Double the improvement in hand function

SARAH Assessment

Baseline assessment:

- SARAH certified therapist initial assessment
- Collection of baseline outcome measures

Education session:

- Pathophysiology, risk factors of rheumatoid arthritis
- Management strategies and advice
- Information regarding the SARAH program

Initial Consultation (40 mins) \$145*

The cost for splinting if required, is charged as additional

SARAH Package Outline

Exercise and review sessions:

- 5 x one-on-one sessions (20 mins each)
- Prescription of SARAH exercise program
- Instruction of exercise equipment at appropriate resistance (exercise band and exercise putty)
- Exercises delivered via the Physitrack exercise program
- Review of patient goals and progression toward achieving them

Package Cost \$512.50* (without equipment)

For more information

The program is conducted under the guidance of a SARAH certified hand therapist as part of your overall management program. To book an appointment please call **03 9458 5166**.

The SARAH program can be delivered at most of our clinics conveniently located across Melbourne.

For more information visit www.melbournehand.com.au/hand-therapy/hand-wrist-arthritis/sarah/



*Pricing correct as of 1 January 2025 and may be subject to change without notice.

¹ Adams J, Bridle C, Dosanjh S, Heine P, Lamb SE, Lord J, McConkey C, Nichols V, Toye F, Underwood MR, Williams MA. Strengthening and stretching for rheumatoid arthritis of the hand (SARAH): design of a randomised controlled trial of a hand and upper limb exercise intervention-ISRCTN89936343. BMC musculoskeletal disorders. 2012 Dec;13(1):1-0.