

Constraint Induced Movement Therapy

What is constraint induced movement therapy (CIMT)?

- Constraint induced movement therapy is a well-researched technique to help certain individuals regain or improve the use of their arm or hand after a stroke or brain injury.
- CIMT involves wearing a large mitt on the “good” hand in order to **discourage** its use and **force** the use of the more impaired arm/hand. This also helps teach the brain to “rewire” itself.
- The occupational therapist will determine how long and for what activities the mitt should be worn.

What can family and friends do?

- Family and friends can provide emotional support and encouragement. This is a physically and emotionally challenging process and may be discouraging at first as the results are not immediate.
- Encourage the individual to wear the mitt and to complete appropriate daily activities as independently as possible.
- Encourage the individual to complete “homework” assignments.

Home-exercise program ideas

- About 30 to 60 minutes of exercise should be done daily at home in addition to wearing the mitt during the day as instructed by your occupational therapist.
- The following is a list of ideas that may be done at home to encourage the use of your weaker arm/hand as determined by your occupational therapist:
 - Eat with utensils or finger foods
 - Grooming activities (brushing teeth, hair care, washing face)
 - Pour water from a small water bottle into plastic cups
 - Hang clothes in a closet
 - Wipe table/countertops/windows
 - Throw small balls/beanbags
 - Place beans/buttons/coins into various size jars/containers
 - Card games, dominoes, Chinese checkers, puzzles
 - Write on paper or wipe-off board
 - Pen and paper games
 - Appropriate craft activities

Important

Your therapist also will instruct you in what activities **should not be completed** with the mitt in place.