Desensitization Exercises

After an injury or surgery, it is common for an area to develop increased sensitivity. This may result in discomfort when everyday objects touch the area.

Desensitization is a treatment to decrease sensitivity by exposing the area to various textures and pressures. Once your incision is healed, you may begin exercises as recommended by your therapist.

Exercises
1. Rub the sensitive area with fabrics of various textures. Begin with softer fabrics and progress to fabrics that are rougher. Examples of fabrics:
   - Cotton balls
   - Flannel
   - Cotton fabric
   - Terry cloth
   - Velcro hook
   - Velcro loop

2. Tap along the sensitive area using a small dowel, eraser or fingertips. Slowly increase the pressure. Tap the sensitive area into a pillow or cushion.

3. Roll the area along a dowel, or roll of putty, or use an empty deodorant, lip balm or perfume bottle with a roller tip and roll the ball over the area.

4. Using a small massager or electric appliance (shaver/toothbrush), massage along the sensitive area.

5. If your hand requires desensitization, place your hand in a container filled with any of the following dry items:
   - Rolled oats
   - Rice
   - Sand
   - Dry beans

Open and close your hand or search for small objects hidden in the container.

Perform each of the circled exercises for _________ seconds/minutes and progress to ________ minutes. Perform every 2 hours during the day.

The more regularly this program is performed, the better the results.