

# **Management of the PIP Joint**

## **BAHT Level 2**

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The three day course I attended was run by NES and was thoroughly worthwhile. Not only was it jam-packed with relevant and useful information, it was also delivered in a fun and memorable fashion!

The layout of the programme enabled me not only to consolidate my current clinical knowledge but also to identify areas of my day to day practice that require attention and development.

The following are just a few of the 'food for thought' ideas I took away with me:

- Several new patterns/ideas for thermoplastic splints to correct boutonniere and swan-neck deformities.
- The importance of incorporating specific interossei and lumbrical exercises into rehabilitation programmes for PIP joint injuries
- The significance of the impact the delicate balance of the flexor and extensor mechanisms have on the whole finger when disrupted at the level of the PIP joint.
- The versatility of neoprene in the treatment of finger injuries – it does not need to be specifically used on larger joints of the hand!

As an Occupational Therapist, it was enlightening to be reminded of the skills I may already have but that I rarely use such as using accessory mobilisation techniques\_ both as an assessment and as a treatment tool. As I assess predominantly open and closed traumatic injuries to the

hand, I am constantly seeing patients with potential PIP joint injuries and as such this course has been invaluable to improving my clinical competence.

The session on differential diagnosis was of particular appeal, as I find I am constantly trying to find the root cause of an injury and often find it particularly challenging when assessing the PIP joint due to its intricate nature.

In addition, when treating those patients that have acquired conditions such as RA or Dupuytren's disease, this course has fuelled my interest in the 'cause and effect' damage to, and around, the PIP joint can have on a person's ability to function.

The skills I have learnt on this course are pertinent not only to me but also to the Hand Therapy team I work within. I plan with my senior physio colleague who also attended the course, to carry out a series of in-service training sessions to all members of our team within the next few months, to disseminate the detailed knowledge we have learnt with the aim of improving our practice and the service which we provide to our patients.

More than anything, this course has increased my confidence in being more experimental and imaginative when treating patients that have injuries to their PIP joints. I have learnt it is absolutely necessary to use multiple treatment modalities in the management of PIP joint injuries due to the complexity of the anatomy and the numerous complications that can occur as a result.

I would like to say a huge thank you to BAHT for assisting me in being able to come on such an informative and eye-opening course as this.