

## DESENSITIZATION TECHNIQUES

**Purpose:** Hypersensitivity is a condition of extreme discomfort or irritability in response to touching or being touched by something that is usually not uncomfortable to touch. This sensitivity often occurs at or near the sight of injury or surgery. It interferes with treatment techniques used in therapy to increase strength, range of motion, joint mobility, etc. Thus it is very important to decrease this sensitivity in order to recover full use of the injured area.

Though your tendency is to not use the involved area and protect it from touch, it is very important that you do touch the area to make it less sensitive. We suggest using a variety of textures that are available in your home.

<b>Textures:</b>	<u>Soft</u>	<u>Medium</u>	<u>Rough</u>
	Cotton	Terry cloth (towel)	Macaroni pieces
	Velvet	Minute rice	Burlap
	Rice	Wool	Popcorn kernals
	Felt	Corduroy	Rough rocks
	Pinto beans	Smooth rocks	"Lego" pieces
	Cushion fabric	Velcro loop	Velcro hook

**Procedure:** Begin with soft textures and progress to rougher textures.

Fill a container with a texture. Place your hand in the container, and move it around. You may also rub your hands on different textures. Begin with a mildly irritating but tolerable texture 3- 5 times / day approximately 1 - 5 minutes / session.

Attempt to increase the amount of time that you can tolerate a texture. Once you can tolerate a texture for 5 minutes stop using that one and progress to the next texture. You may be tolerating more than two textures simultaneously.

**CAUTION:** Use light to medium pressures only to prevent abrasions to the skin. DO NOT perform desensitization techniques over open or partially healed wounds.