

## Constraint Induced Movement Therapy

### What is Constraint Induced Movement Therapy (CIMT)?

- A well researched technique to help certain individuals regain or improve the use of their arm and/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 in teaching the brain to “re-wire” itself.
- The occupational therapist will determine how long and for what activities the mitt should be worn.

### What can family and friends do?

- 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 30-60 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:
  - Eating finger foods or utensils
  - Grooming activities (brushing teeth, hair care, washing face)
  - Pour water from a small water bottle into plastic cups
  - Hanging clothes in a closet
  - Wiping table/countertops/windows
  - Throwing small balls/beanbags
  - Placing beans/buttons/coins into various size jars/containers
  - Card games, dominoes, Chinese checkers, puzzles
  - Writing on paper or wipe off board or pen and paper games
  - Appropriate craft activities

### Important

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