**Home Program for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_:**

**Tactile stimulation:**

Using fur or fabric (the most comfortable texture you can find), gently rub the working zone for no longer than one minute. Use short, gentle strokes or soft circles, whatever feels better. If this creates any discomfort, stop and move to the default zone (a).

Never do tactile stimulation for longer than one minute at a time!

Try to do tactile stimulation at least four times a day, and even better if you can get to eight!

**Working zones for tactile stimulation: (just do the ones that are highlighted!)**

*Radial nerve* a) on the back of arm above elbow, b) below elbow on back of forearm c) half-way down back of forearm above wrist d) between wrist and thumb on back of hand, and e) back of the thumb just below the second joint

*Median nerve* a) on the back of arm above elbow, b) with palm up, on the outside of the smooth skin of the forearm just below the elbow c) with palm up, area of skin just below where the thumb meets the wrist, d) palm of the hand over the muscles of the thumb e) tips of the index and middle fingers

*Ulnar nerve* a) on the inside of the upper arm, in between the elbow and armpit b) with the palm facing up, on the inside aspect of the forearm about 2 inches below the elbow c) with the palm facing up, on the inside of the forearm about 2 inches above the wrist d) on the back of the hand between the pinky finger knuckle and the wrist e) on the palm of the hand between the pinky finger and the wrist

*Neutral zone* a) on your tummy, on the same side as the painful arm b) just below your collarbone, on the same side as the painful arm

Avoiding the Red Zone: Keep the burning at bay!

• Limit the application of creams or lotions over the area

• Limit the rubbing of clothing over the area. Constant gentle pressure from a fitting sleeve may be better than a loose sleeve.

• Limit any movements that create tension on the skin through the red zone

• Avoid direct spray from the shower on the sensitive area

• Avoid exposure to cold air, cold objects, cold solutions (like alcohol)

• Limit use of the hand that is sensitive to only what is necessary to accomplish important daily tasks…do as much as you need to do, and as little as you have to!

• Avoid prolonged heat application to the sensitive area – use the working zones instead!

It is ok to experience minor discomfort with touch and activity BUT try to avoid feeding the fire – use burning pain as your guide to tell you what NOT to do.

**Sensory Re-education Strategies**

Sensory re-education is only possible on skin that is no longer painful to touch. You will find that once the painful area shrinks in size, the skin that used to be painful to touch is now numb, or has ‘funny’ feeling. The sensory receptors have been working at the most basic level: that is, as pain receptors. Now they need to go back to their regular jobs as pressure, temperature, vibration, stretch, movement and touch receptors. But these receptors need a refresher course in what ‘normal’ feels like.

Remember, work for short periods of time but several times a day: your brain is learning, and will get tired quickly (this is hard work!). This is best to do where there are not a lot of distractions so you can concentrate on the feeling… really think about what you are doing.

**Strategy 1:** Comfortable stimulation with a variety of textures – hard, soft, slippery, smooth, wet, rough, cold, warm, silky, slimy. Use objects of different materials like cork, various types of fabric, fur, glass, metal, plastic, or wood. Start in an area of normal feeling and stroke downwards into the edge of the numb or funny area.

**Strategy 2**: Discrimination activities – try to tell apart similar but different things, like…

With a partner to help:

* Big and little – Q-tip and cotton ball, end of a pen or marker, big and small marble
* Up and down – which direction a light stroke is applied?
* Here or there – where did I touch you?
* Letters traced on skin

On your own (no using vision or other hand!):

* Alphabet cards
* What coin is this?
* Coin or washer, safety pin or paper clip, nail or bolt
* Different types of fabric squares – denim, corduroy, fleece, t-shirt, cotton, linen, silk, satin
* Different shapes cut from a comfortable texture (craft foam, fleece), then moving to a rougher texture (felt, kitchen scrubbies)
* Finding small objects ‘hidden’ in a bowl of a textured medium (uncooked beans, shaving cream, pudding)