**FINGER EXERCISE FOR THE STIFF HAND**

The exercises described below can be used for a stiff hand post immobilization or post surgery per your doctor’s or hand therapist’s recommendation. The exercises can typically be performed 4-6X/day or as tolerated with 10-15 repetitions being the norm. Applying heat prior to exercise will significantly reduce pain and stiffness, and allow a greater amount of range-of-motion (ROM) during your exercises.

Below is a picture demonstrating the three joints in the fingers. The abbreviated terms will be utilized on this handout.

-MPJ is the metacarpophalangeal joint or knuckle
-PIPJ is the proximal interphalangeal joint or middle joint of finger
-DIPJ is the distal interphalangeal joint or top joint of finger
ACTIVE RANGE OF MOTION (AROM)

1. **Tendon gliding exercises.** Perform the three hand positions (A, B, C) shown below. After each position, return to a straight hand position (D).

   - **A.** Make a fist
   - **B.** With fingers and knuckles straight, bend PIPJ and DIPJ joints. Do not bend knuckles.
   - **C.** Start with fingers straight. Bend knuckles and middle joints. Keep straight to touch base of palm.
   - **D.**
**BLOCKING EXERCISES**

1. **PIP Joint Blocking**
   *Support below the PIPJ to block motion at the MPJ and actively flex and extend at the PIPJ as shown.*

2. **DIP Joint Blocking**
   *Block the PIPJ and actively flex and extend the DIPJ*