

Paraffin Bath

A paraffin bath is a type of heat treatment that can be done at home. It is often used to heat small joints like the joints in the hands and feet. With the paraffin bath, heat is able to surround the joints. This treatment is often done before the fingers or toes are stretched.

Gather these supplies

- A crock pot that holds at least 3 quarts or a paraffin bath
- 3 pounds of low melt point paraffin from a medical supply store (make sure that the paraffin you buy is made for therapy purposes)
- A candy thermometer
- A plastic bag (small kitchen garbage bag) for each hand and foot being treated
- A bath towel for each hand and foot being treated

Follow these precautions

- Handle the paraffin with extreme care. It is **flammable**.
- Be sure that your body does not touch the side or bottom of the pan as you dip your hand or foot into the hot paraffin.
- Do not put paraffin over open cuts or sores.

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Do the marked (✓) treatment below

☐ Dip Wrap

1. Put three pounds of paraffin in the crock pot or paraffin bath.
2. When the paraffin is melted, let it cool to 125 degrees. This should cause the surface wax to harden. Check the temperature carefully with the candy thermometer. Do not use the paraffin if the temperature is more than 125 degrees. Higher temperatures may burn your skin.
3. Wash the hand or foot being treated.
4. Before dipping your hand or foot into the paraffin, set a plastic bag and towel nearby so you can wrap your hand or foot quickly after dipping.
5. Carefully dip the hand or foot into the paraffin. Be careful not to touch the sides or bottom of the pan. Remove it and hold your hand or foot above the paraffin until it stops dripping. Repeat this 5 to 7 times to form a thick glove over your hand or foot. Do not let the paraffin go above the first dip line when you dip after the first time.
6. Do not move your hand or foot after the first dipping. Moving will crack the paraffin coat. These cracks become hot spots which can cause discomfort.
7. Wrap your hand or foot quickly in a bag to hold the heat then cover with a towel.
8. Leave the towel on for 20 minutes.
9. Run a forefinger down the inside of the wrap when it is ready to come off. Peel the paraffin off.
10. The paraffin can be placed back in the crock pot or paraffin bath to melt and reuse with your next treatment.

☐ Immersion

1. Follow steps 1 to 3 above.
2. Before dipping your hand or foot into the paraffin, place a towel nearby.

3. Dip your hand or foot into the wax.
4. Remove it and hold your hand or foot over the paraffin until it stops dripping.
5. Dip your hand or foot 4 more times. Do not let the paraffin go above the first dip line when you dip after the first time.
6. Put your hand or foot in the crock pot or paraffin bath one more time. Leave it in for 20 minutes.
7. When the time is up, remove your hand or foot from the pan, place your hand or foot on the towel and peel off the paraffin.

Cleaning the Paraffin

To clean dirt and dust from the paraffin, strain the melted wax through gauze or cheesecloth. Store the wax in its container. The wax will then be ready for the next treatment.

Special Instructions

- ❖ **Talk to your doctor or others on your health care team if you have questions. You may request more written information from the Library for Health Information at (614) 293-3707 or email: health-info@osu.edu.**