



Pain Management
Physiotherapy Service

Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS)

Mirror Therapy

Information for you



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You should only use these guidelines after a consultation with your physiotherapist.

What is mirror visual feedback?

We can use a technique known as Mirror Therapy to help Complex Regional Pain Syndrome. Mirrors are useful in the treatment of amputee phantom limb pain and research has demonstrated that mirror visual feedback has benefits in the management of CRPS. It is thought that the mirror works by ‘tricking’ the brain to believe that the painful limb is now ‘normal’, through looking at the reflection of the unaffected limb. This helps, over time, to correct the messages to the brain and reduces pain which in turn may assist exercise.

What should I do?

Mirror visual feedback should become part of your planned exercise programme. Follow the instructions below 4-5 times a day (or as directed) but only use the mirror for brief periods (maximum 10 minutes) or until you feel you are no longer able to concentrate. It is best to use it a little and often. Like any new technique, it will need practice and may need several trials before you are used to it.

- Find a quiet room where you will be able to concentrate and not be interrupted.
- Make sure that you are seated or lying comfortably with your back well supported.
- Position the mirror so that the reflective surface is facing your unaffected limb and your affected (the one with CRPS) limb is **hidden** behind the mirror (Figures 1 & 2).

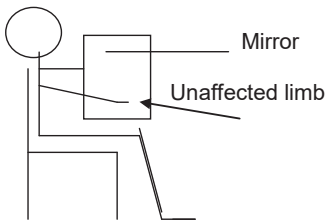


Figure 1: Upper Limb

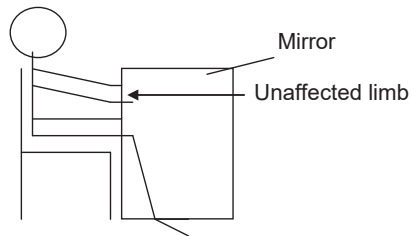


Figure 2: Lower Limb

- Lean forward so that you are now able to see the mirror image of your unaffected limb in the mirror and simply look at this reflection **without moving** either your affected or unaffected limb. Concentrate hard on the mirror reflection for the minimum of a couple of minutes.
- Once you are comfortable with this, very **slowly** start to move **both** limbs in **exactly** the same way while still looking at the reflection in the mirror. You may want someone with you the first time

you do this to make sure you are moving both limbs at the same time and in the same way. It does not matter what movements you chose to do as long as you do the same with both limbs. There may be specific exercises that your physiotherapist has prescribed for you that you could do while using the mirror.

- If pain prevents movement of your affected limb, then try to imagine that you are moving it in the same manner as the unaffected limb.
- If pain or stiffness becomes a problem while you are exercising then stop and go back to simply looking at the mirror image while both limbs are resting.

Remember: Do not use the mirror for prolonged periods (more than 10 minutes) as your concentration levels will drop and always move your affected and unaffected limbs in the same way.

Are there any side effects with this treatment?

Occasionally, people feel unusual sensations in the limb that is hidden from their view, when using the mirror.

For example:-

- heavier or lighter
- warmer or colder
- reduced sensation or as if it is 'floating'
- or even that you have an additional limb

All of these sensations are much less common when both limbs are moving in the same manner and should last no more than a few seconds or minutes after you have stopped using the mirror. If at any time you find a sensation uncomfortable or disturbing then simply stop the exercise and view both limbs without the mirror and the sensation should quickly pass.

Treatment plan for mirror therapy

Name:	Date:
CHI:
Patient sticky label	

How often?

.....

How long?

.....


When to stop:

.....


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Translations



Easy to read



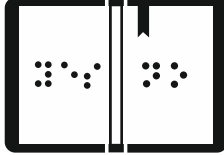
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