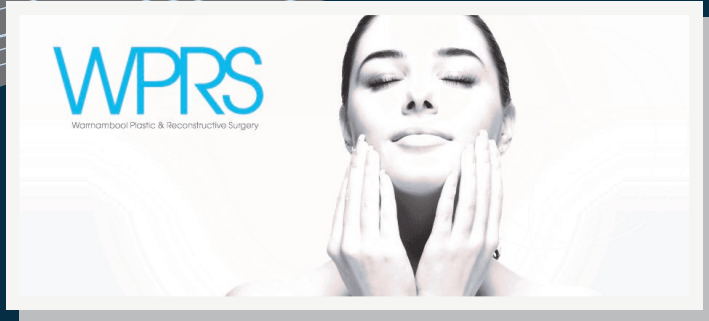


## this issue

- What are the benefits of abdominoplasty?
- What are the treatment options for Osteoarthritis of the fingers?



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### Osteoarthritis of fingers: what are the treatment options?

Osteoarthritis commonly affects the hand with the most commonly affected joint in the hand being the first carpometacarpal joint, followed by the distal interphalangeal joints of the fingers. The condition affects women more commonly and can be a debilitating condition affecting hand function, resulting in significant decrease in quality of life and significant pain.

So what are the options to assist these patients?

1. Referral to a Hand therapist: a well-qualified therapist is able to provide patients with exercises that can often help with strengthening and maintaining mobility as well as splints that can help maintain quality of life
2. Intra-articular steroid injection: This is particularly useful if one joint is painful. It can often provide prolonged symptomatic relief especially if combined with splinting. Up to 3 injections in one joint is considered to be safe.
3. Joint replacement: the proximal interphalangeal and metacarpophalangeal joints are both amenable to replacement. Many options are available however the gold standard is still considered to be the Swanson joint replacement. It is important that the ligamentous structure of the joint is intact and range of movement if maintained if considering a replacement. Although this procedure can result in decreased range of movement if alleviates pain effectively.
4. Joint fusion: this is a particularly good procedure for the distal interphalangeal joint for improving alignment, improving grip strength and alleviating pain.

Although there is no cure for osteoarthritis, there are certainly many treatment options for patients afflicted with this disabling condition. If you have a patient whose quality of life is affected, consider referring them for surgical opinion or to a qualified hand therapist.

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### Abdominoplasty: what are the benefits?

Abdominoplasty often labeled “tummy tucks” are usually thought of as a cosmetic procedure in the community. Whilst there is no doubt the procedure leads to an improved appearance of the patients abdomen, there are many other benefits.

These include:

1. Improved core strength: pregnancy results in divarication of the rectus muscles. Whilst physiotherapy often helps to correct some of this, it cannot be corrected completely. Weakness of these muscles reduces core strength and can often result in back pain. During an abdominoplasty these muscles are plicated and strength improves post surgery
2. Intertrigo: over hang of lower abdominal skin can often to lead to fungal infection in the skin folds and significant discomfort. This is particularly an issue in massive weight loss patients. Removal of the excess skin eliminates this issue
3. Stress incontinence: recent studies on stress incontinence show the benefits of improved rectus muscle strength and it has been reported that stress incontinence in women may improve post abdominoplasty.
4. Improved ability to exercise: people with large areas of skin that over hand often have significant difficulty exercising. Removal of this excess fat and skin has the associated benefit of allowing patient to exercise with less discomfort.

Whilst an abdominoplasty has many potential benefits it is important to explain to patients that it is not a weight loss procedure and that their BMI need to be below 35 before they will be considered for surgery. Optimally patients will have lost or reduced their weight to a stable level for 3 months pre surgery.



**Wishing Hugo,  
the youngest member of  
our WPRS team, a very  
Happy 3rd Birthday!!!**

