

# Tremor or shaking hands

A tremor is when you're not able to control shaking or trembling in part of your body.

It's often normal to have a slight tremor. But sometimes you might need medical help to reduce it.

A tremor usually affects your hands. But sometimes it can affect other parts of the body such as your head, legs or vocal cords.

## When a tremor is normal

It's normal to have a slight tremor. For example, if you hold your hands or arms out in front of you, they will not be completely still.

Sometimes a tremor becomes more noticeable.

This often happens:

- as you get older
- when you're stressed, anxious, tired or angry
- after smoking or having a drink with caffeine in it, such as tea, coffee or cola
- if you're very hot or cold

Try to avoid things you think trigger or worsen your tremor.

For example:

- avoid stressful situations, if you can
- drink less caffeine
- learn relaxation techniques to help cope with stress or anxiety

Sometimes a tremor can affect your confidence. But often you are more aware of the tremor than anyone looking at you.

## Other reasons for a tremor

A tremor is sometimes linked to another medical condition. For example, Parkinson's disease, multiple sclerosis or an [overactive thyroid](#).

Some medicines can cause a tremor - such as an inhaler for asthma.

Do not suddenly stop taking any prescribed medicine you are on, unless your GP tells you to. Stopping medicine suddenly could be harmful to you.

### Contact your GP if you have a tremor or shaking hands and it is:

- getting worse over time
- affecting your daily activities

Your GP will check if the tremor is caused by another condition. They may also be able to offer treatment.

## At your GP appointment

Your GP will examine you and ask about:

- any other symptoms
- any medicine you are taking
- your medical history
- your family's medical history - some types of tremor run in families

A mild tremor that is not caused by a medical condition does not usually need any treatment. Your GP may want to monitor you to make sure it does not get worse.

Your GP may refer you to a specialist for more tests. They may do this to check if another condition is causing your tremor.

## Treating a severe tremor

If you have a tremor that's affecting your life, your GP may prescribe medicine. Medicine cannot cure the tremor, but it often helps to reduce the shaking or trembling.

You may be prescribed medicine to take all the time or only when you need it. For example, you could take it before a stressful situation that may cause your tremor to get worse.

If you have a head tremor or the tremor affects your voice, you may have injections to block the nerves and relax your muscles.

In rare cases, brain surgery may be an option to treat a severe tremor that is not helped by medicine.

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