

# Paraffin Wax Units

A paraffin wax unit is a machine that heats and holds paraffin wax, a type of wax used for candles. The wax is intended to completely cover the hand (or other body parts such as the feet). Its warm temperature is meant to provide relief from arthritis pain, sore joints or sore muscles. This treatment is recommended for various medical and surgical hand problems and may be recommended by your hand specialist. This unit should not be used if you have open wounds/cuts, problems with sensation, or if you only want to warm your hands.

A paraffin wax unit may be rented or purchased. The units are low-cost and can be purchased from a local retailer (drugstore, department store or discount store) or online.

## How to Use a Paraffin Wax Unit

First, choose a place in your home where the unit can be set up according to the instructions. **Pay particular attention to the safety features to prevent accidents.** These units usually can remain set up and plugged in at all times, allowing the paraffin to be melted and available for use throughout the day.

When using your unit, follow these instructions:

1. Wash your hands with soap and water and dry them.
2. Rub lotion onto your hands: Hand lotion allows the wax to be removed easily after treatment.
3. Dip your hand into the wax (**Figure 1**): Your fingertips should go in first. Keep your fingers separated and submerge your hand all the way past the wrist if desired.
4. Remove your hand after it has been coated with wax.
5. Repeat steps 3 and 4: Dip your hand 6-8 times, waiting a few seconds between each dip. This allows layers of wax to form over your hand.
6. Immediately cover your hand with a plastic bag and wrap with a hand towel (**Figure 2**): Wait 10-15 minutes. This will create moist, deep heat for your hand.
7. Remove the towel, plastic bag and cooled wax after 10-15 minutes.
8. Return the wax from your hand to the paraffin unit for reuse (**Figure 3**).
9. Proceed with exercises that have been recommended by your hand surgeon and/or hand therapist.

When the wax level of your unit is low, you can purchase additional blocks of paraffin, usually from the store of your original purchase or a local beauty supply shop.

Figure 2



Figure 1



Figure 3

