

Case Number:	CM14-0102112		
Date Assigned:	07/30/2014	Date of Injury:	07/09/2010
Decision Date:	04/21/2015	UR Denial Date:	06/16/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	07/02/2014

HOW THE IMR FINAL DETERMINATION WAS MADE

MAXIMUS Federal Services sent the complete case file to an expert reviewer. He/she has no affiliation with the employer, employee, providers or the claims administrator. He/she has been in active clinical practice for more than five years and is currently working at least 24 hours a week in active practice. The expert reviewer was selected based on his/her clinical experience, education, background, and expertise in the same or similar specialties that evaluate and/or treat the medical condition and disputed items/Service. He/she is familiar with governing laws and regulations, including the strength of evidence hierarchy that applies to Independent Medical Review determinations.

The Expert Reviewer has the following credentials:
 State(s) of Licensure: California, Hawaii
 Certification(s)/Specialty: Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation

CLINICAL CASE SUMMARY

The expert reviewer developed the following clinical case summary based on a review of the case file, including all medical records:

The injured worker is a 49-year-old male who sustained an industrial injury on 07/09/10. Initial complaints and diagnoses are not available. Prior treatments include medication and physical therapy. Prior diagnostic studies are not discussed. Current complaints include pain in the right hand fingers. In a progress note dated 09/06/14 the treating provider reports the plan of care to include a hand surgeon consultation, continue physical therapy, a MIR of the right wrist, Interferential unit and supplies, and a home rehab kit for the hand/wrist. The requested treatment is a hand exercise kit. ODG Forearm, Wrist, & Hand Exercises: The patient presents with pain affecting the right wrist, hand, and finger. The current request is for Hand Exercise Kit. The treating physician states, Hand exercise kit, Limit R.O.M., Minimize Swelling, Control Chronic Pain, Increase/Preserve R.O.M., Increase Circulation, and Reduce Pain. (10) The ODG guidelines state, "Instruction in proper exercise technique is important. Stretching exercises as recommended by AAOS have positive, limited evidence. Hand exercises might have some effect on arthritis pain, but the evidence is not strong, according to a new systematic review. Some weak studies suggest that patients should do repetitions of different exercises to increase both joint mobility and grip strength for a minimum of 20 minutes three times a week." While ODG guidelines do support exercise kits, the current request for an "exercise kit" for the right hand does not delineate what is included in the "kit." Without knowing what the kit is for, one cannot make a recommendation regarding its appropriateness based on the guidelines. In this case, the treating physician has not documented what the kit includes. The current request is not medically necessary and the recommendation is for denial.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

The Final Determination was based on decisions for the disputed items/services set forth below:

Hand exercise kit: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation ODG Forearm, Wrist, & Hand Exercises.

Decision rationale: The patient presents with pain affecting the right wrist, hand, and finger. The current request is for Hand Exercise Kit. The treating physician states, Hand exercise kit, Limit R.O.M., Minimize Swelling, Control Chronic Pain, Increase/Preserve R.O.M., Increase Circulation, and Reduce Pain. (10) The ODG guidelines state, "Instruction in proper exercise technique is important. Stretching exercises as recommended by AAOS have positive, limited evidence. Hand exercises might have some effect on arthritis pain, but the evidence is not strong, according to a new systematic review. Some weak studies suggest that patients should do repetitions of different exercises to increase both joint mobility and grip strength for a minimum of 20 minutes three times a week." While ODG guidelines do support exercise kits, the current request for an "exercise kit" for the right hand does not delineate what is included in the "kit." Without knowing what the kit is for, one cannot make a recommendation regarding its appropriateness based on the guidelines. In this case, the treating physician has not documented what the kit includes. The current request is not medically necessary and the recommendation is for denial.