

## Thumb or Finger Hold

It's common for a patient to grab and hold onto a thumb or finger(s) of their caregiver. Prepare for this situation and avoid injury by learning the release technique below.

### 1. Control

- Immediately place your hand in a handshake position by making a fist around the patient's hand as shown in the first photo below.
- Doing this step prevents the patient from extending your thumb or finger(s) and bending them back, which is the real the risk of injury.



Thumb hold.

### 2. Isolate

- Move away from the patient's free hand side. If you can't move, block their leg(s) or feet with your leg or foot. This will protect you from other threats, such as kicks, punches or bites.
- Keep a wide stance for balance and strength.
- Gain increased control by keeping your hand in the handshake position and using your free hand to lightly grip the patient's wrist/arm. This will prevent the patient from releasing before you are ready.

### 3. Release

- Use a **rolling** or **ratcheting** (roll, adjust, roll) motion to release your thumb or finger(s) from the hold. This motion provides the leverage you need to safely gain release.
- Hold the patient's wrist/arm steady with your free hand to control the timing of the release. Once free, step away from the patient.

**Key note:** Be particularly persistent if the patient has grabbed your finger(s). It takes slightly longer to gain release from a finger hold than from a thumb hold. Using the ratcheting motion can be effective in triggering a release from a finger hold.



Place your hand in a handshake position by making a fist.



Lightly grip the patient's wrist/arm with your free hand and use a rolling or ratcheting motion to gain release.



Remember, a finger release may take longer and require more ratcheting.

To reach a positive outcome, always:

- **Stay calm.**
- **Attempt to get assistance** from a co-worker.
- Follow steps to **control, isolate** and **release**.

### Remember:

- **Immediately report** all details of aggressive verbal or physical patient behavior to your manager.
- **Update** medical records to warn other caregivers of past aggressive behaviors.
- **Practice** this technique with co-workers to build confidence.

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