

### 1. Palm to palm



If washing your hands, lather the soap well for a minimum of 10–15 seconds, ensuring that your hands remain outside of the running water while lathering. These illustrations show hand washing, but you need to perform the same movements whether using soap and water, alcohol-based hand sanitiser or hand cream. First rub hands palm to palm.

### 2. Palm to back of hand, fingers overlaced



Decontaminate the backs of the hands by rubbing the palm of one hand over the back of the other hand with fingers overlaced and vice versa.

### 3. Palm to palm, fingers interlaced



Decontaminate the interdigital spaces, which are often heavily contaminated, by interlacing the fingers and rubbing vigorously.

### 4. Fingers interlocked



Interlock the fingers in opposing palms and rub vigorously to decontaminate the backs of the fingers.

### 5. Rub each thumb in each palm, rotating



Rotate your right hand around your left thumb and vice versa.

### 6. Rub fingertips of one hand in other palm, rotating



Decontaminate the fingertips and nails of both hands: rub the fingertips of your left hand in the palm of the right hand and vice versa.

### 7. Rub each wrist, rotating



Rotate your right hand around your left wrist and vice versa. If using alcohol-based hand sanitiser, continue rubbing until it has fully evaporated and omit the next two steps.

### 8. Hand washing only: rinsing your hands



If you have washed your hands, rinse your hands and wrists thoroughly under running water; residual soap can dry the skin or damage its integrity. After rinsing, do not touch the taps with your hands.

### 9. Hand washing only: drying your hands



Following washing, dry hands thoroughly using good-quality paper hand towels. If the taps are not hands-free, or elbow- or foot-operated mixer taps, use paper towels to turn off the taps to prevent cross infection. Dispose of these as domestic waste after use. When disposing of used paper hand towels, take care not to recontaminate hands; use a foot-operated pedal bin.

### Areas most frequently missed



Effective hand hygiene involves methodically rubbing all parts of the hands and wrists. The fingertips and thumbs are the areas of the hands that are most frequently missed by healthcare professionals and healthcare students, and which therefore need particular attention (Škodová *et al.*, 2015a; 2015b; Pan *et al.*, 2014).