

Dealt a Devastating Hand

Linda's hands were changing. She experienced extreme pain at times and her knuckles would get red and swollen. This painful **inflammation** that felt like a war was taking place inside her joints.

She later learned that she had a degenerative **autoimmune disease**. Her body mistakenly took her own **synovial membranes** to be a threat. In response to this perceived attack from the tissues that line the joints, her body responded by waging an attack with its own immune system.

Overtime this abnormal immune response lead to a breakdown of the synovial joints in her hips, knees and mostly in her hands. Her knuckles virtually melted away, disfiguring her hands. The deformity became even more pronounced as the bones in her fingers began to tilt in the direction of her little finger. Her doctor called this **Ulnar drift**.

For most of her life Linda had taken the flexible padding in between each bone for granted. Now ever aware of the **cartilage** that was crumbling in her joints, Linda struggled with tasks like getting dressed and preparing food. Life with rheumatoid arthritis meant that her joints would lose form and function, making her past times like knitting and baking out of reach.