

## Care of your hand after surgery

### 1. ELEVATION

Elevation will minimise pain, swelling and stiffness in your hand.

Try to keep it above your heart as much as possible.

For example:

- Keep it in a sling whilst out and about
- At home, rest it on some cushions
- To sleep at night, rest it on a pillow

### 2. PAIN

Dr Tawfik and your Anaesthetist recommend regular simple pain medications to keep ahead of pain. Unless there are allergies, we usually recommend regular Paracetamol + Ibuprofen with each meal, and Paracetamol at night; for at least 48 hours.

Other medications may be prescribed in individual cases.

If there is excessive pain despite medications, please contact our office.

### 3. MOVE THE UNAFFECTED JOINTS

To prevent stiffness in uninjured joints, regularly move your shoulder, elbow and any fingers/thumb that are free from your cast.

For example:

- Elevate your arm forward and then up as far as possible so your upper arm is next to your ear, then slowly lower. (Fig 1)
- Bend and straighten your elbow.
- Gently turn your forearm from palm facing the ceiling to palm facing the floor. (Fig 2 & 3)

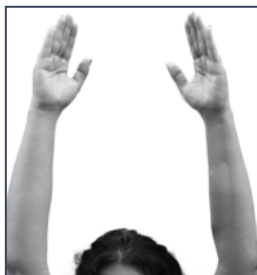


Fig 1

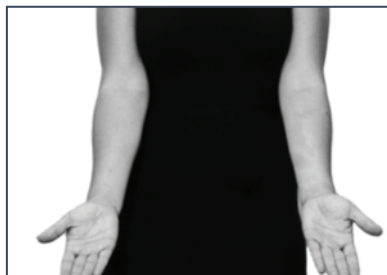


Fig 2



Fig 3

- Take the thumb to the tip of the finger if able. (Fig 4 & 5)
- Bend your fingers into a fist and straighten. (Fig 6 & 7)
- You should do these exercises gently, but regularly, about 10 times each, 3-4 times per day.



**Fig 4**



**Fig 5**



**Fig 6**



**Fig 7**

#### 4. USE YOUR HAND

You may use your hand for light activities as you feel comfortable doing so. This can include activities such as brushing your teeth, dressing etc. You should not lift anything heavier than a tea cup. You may go for gentle walks but not engage in any vigorous exercise or contact sports until cleared by your surgeon.

#### 5. YOUR CAST OR DRESSING

Leave your cast or dressing intact until your follow up appointment with the Surgeon or Therapist. It must be kept clean and dry. If it is uncomfortable or gets wet or dirty, contact your Surgeon or Therapist.

#### 6. HAND THERAPY

After some operations you may need a splint or cast fitted, advice on scar care and/or specific exercises.

See below if early post-operative Therapy is recommended.

#### 7. POST-OPERATIVE APPOINTMENTS

Below are your post-operative appointments. It is very important to try and keep these appointments where possible, or to call and reschedule.

#### 8. EMERGENCY

In an emergency during business hours, call the office on **1300 829 345**.

After hours, call St Luke's Hospital, Sydney Hospital or Wollongong Private Hospital and ask to be put through to Dr Tawfik.

### APPOINTMENTS

#### DR JOHN TAWFIK

**NEXT APPT:** Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

**Potts Point**  
St Luke's Clinic  
Hemsley House  
20 Roslyn St  
Potts Point 2011

**Sydney**  
Centre for  
Hand Surgery  
Level 7  
Park House  
187 Macquarie St  
Sydney 2000

**Wollongong**  
Seaview Clinic  
Wollongong  
Private Hospital  
Suite 701, Level 7  
360-364 Crown St  
Wollongong 2500

#### HAND THERAPY

**NEXT APPT:** Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

Therapist name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_