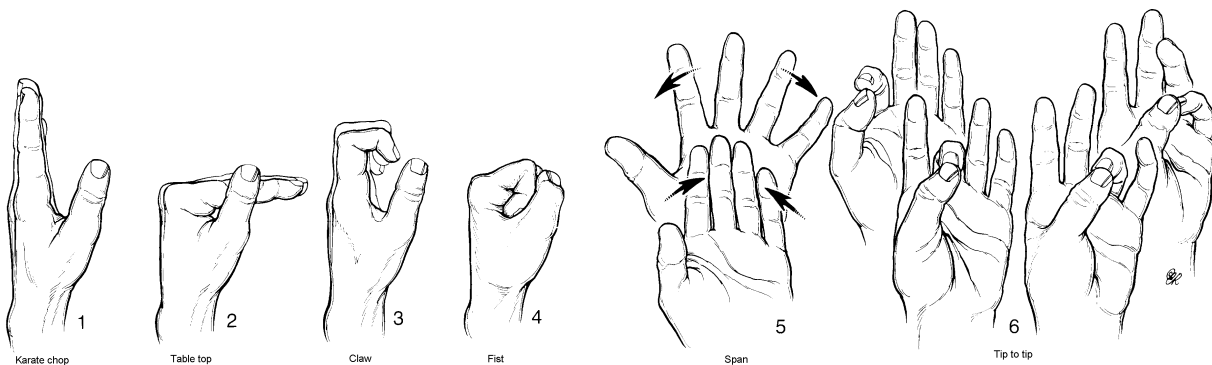# HAND SURGERY

Local anaesthetic has been injected around the site of operation and therefore this area and the nearby fingers will remain numb for up to ten hours after surgery. As this effect wears off, it may well be worth taking some pain-killers.

Hand elevation is important to prevent swelling and stiffness of the fingers. Please remember not to walk with your hand dangling, or to sit with your hand held in your lap. It is fine, however, to lower your hand for light use and you should get back to normal light activities as soon as possible as guided by common sense. There are a number of exercises you should do to prevent stiffness.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Karate chop | Table top | Claw | Fist | Span | Tip to tip |

You have been discharged with a supportive dressing, consisting of gauze, wool and a crepe bandage. Please remove the entire dressing after seven days and inspect the wound. There obviously will be some swelling and bruising. Look out for any redness or tenderness in the area around the wound that might indicate an infection. Do not apply antiseptic but please contact my secretary if you have any worries. Once dressings are removed, it is safe to get the hand wet in a bath or shower. The wound and the surrounding skin can become dry and if this occurs, briefly immerse the whole hand in water to which a small quantity of baby-oil has been added. Unscented moisturisers (e.g. E45, Diprobase creams) can be used on the hand but avoid rubbing them directly into the wound at this stage.

Your stitches will be removed (if necessary) at about two weeks after the operation. Once healed, the scar may become lumpy, firm, tender and pink. The intensity and length of the period of "scar immaturity" is very variable but it usually settles after about three months. It can be helped by massaging the scar and surrounding area firmly with the moisturizing cream.

You can drive if you are comfortable and have regained full finger movements and if you have sufficient power to control the vehicle. Timing of your return to work is variable according to your occupation and you should discuss this.