



## CARE OF YOUR HAND AFTER SURGERY

### 1. ELEVATION

Hand swelling is common after surgery and may take some time to settle.

Swelling can be minimised by elevation (water flows downhill), exercise and a light compression dressing.

- Wear a sling for the first day or two (particularly until the local anaesthetic wears off).
- When resting, elevate the hand on some cushions.
- Sleep with the operated hand slightly elevated on a pillow.

### 2. PAIN

Your anaesthetist will discuss post-operative pain management in hospital and will also prescribe some pain relief.

The anaesthetist and/or Dr Scougall will inject some long acting local anaesthetic around the surgical site, so the area may be numb for a few hours post-operatively.

The nurses will also discuss pain relief and give you some medications before you leave hospital.

If you experience excessive pain, please contact us on:

- Phone 9356 0274
- Email [peter@scougall.com.au](mailto:peter@scougall.com.au)

Or contact Sydney Hospital on 9382 7111. The on-call Hand Surgery Registrar will be able to advise you and contact Dr Scougall.

### 3. MOVE THE UNAFFECTED JOINTS

One of the more common risks of hand injuries and surgery is stiffness. Stiffness can be minimised by exercise.

Remember to regularly exercise the unaffected arm joints (shoulder/elbow and any wrist, finger and thumb joints not immobilised by a plaster or splint).

- 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)



**FIG 4**



**FIG 5**



**FIG 6**



**FIG 7**

You should do these exercises gently, but regularly, about 10 times each, 3-4 times per day.

#### 4. HAND USE

Use your hand for light activities where possible (including eating, brushing teeth, dressing and computer work). Avoid heavy lifting, driving and vigorous exercise until cleared by Dr Scougall.

In general, you can return to driving when you feel safe to do so, however it's best to check with Dr Scougall.

#### 5. YOUR CAST OR DRESSING

Keep your dressing or cast intact, clean and dry until seeing the Hand Therapist or Dr Scougall.

If the dressing becomes painful, tight, wet or dirty, please contact your hand therapist or Dr Scougall.

#### 6. HAND THERAPY

Post-operative hand therapy may be required (e.g. for a plaster, splints, exercises, oedema control and/ or scar care).

#### 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 9356 0274 and reschedule.

#### 8. EMERGENCY

In an emergency during business hours, contact Dr Scougall by phone on 9356 0274, email [peter@scougall.com.au](mailto:peter@scougall.com.au) or [admin@scougall.com.au](mailto:admin@scougall.com.au).

Or phone Sydney Hospital on 9382 7111 and ask for the Hand Registrar on call. The registrar will contact Dr Scougall.

## APPOINTMENTS

### Dr Peter Scougall

FRACS (Orth), FA Orth A

NEXT APPT. DATE \_\_\_\_\_

TIME \_\_\_\_\_

- |   |  |   |   |
|---|--|---|---|
| <input type="radio"/> POTTS POINT   | <input type="radio"/> MOORE PARK   | <input type="radio"/> WOLLONGONG  | <input type="radio"/> FIGTREE   |
| St Luke's Clinic<br>Hemsley House<br>20 Roslyn Street<br>Potts Point 2011 | The Stadium Sports<br>Medicine Centre<br>Ground Floor<br>Sheridan Building<br>Moore Park Road<br>Moore Park 2010 | Illawarra<br>Rheumatology<br>Piccadilly Centre<br>341 Crown Street<br>Wollongong 2500 | The Consulting Suites<br>Figtree Private Hospital<br>1 Suttor Place<br>Figtree 2525 |

### HAND THERAPY

NEXT APPT. DATE \_\_\_\_\_

TIME \_\_\_\_\_

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

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_