

## Patient Information



# Upper Limb Unit: Hand Therapy

## Dupuytren's Release

Dupuytren's contracture is a condition named by Baron Dupuytren who operated on the condition in 1832. The layer of tissue in the hand called the palmar fascia develops thickened nodules or bands, which slowly pull the fingers down into the palm. Dupuytren's is more common in men than women and may be inherited although its cause is unknown.

Dupuytren's is treated with surgery, when the hand is unable to get flat to the table. Different methods may be used depending upon the extent and the areas affected. An incision is made and the affected fascia is removed.

The surgery is to improve finger movement and hand function but may not be a cure as Dupuytren's is a recurrent problem. To gain the maximum from your surgery therapy is necessary to maintain and improve the movement in the hand and the mobility of the scar.

When you attend the therapy department the therapist will reduce the dressing to allow you to exercise. Try to keep the hand clean and dry and avoid pressure on the hand e.g. driving or gardening whilst the wound is healing.

**Movement of the fingers takes a priority over wound healing, especially after five days following the surgery, so do not worry if your wound oozes during exercise.**

You may be asked to wear a splint at night to help your finger(s) to straighten. Your therapist will make one and advise you if needed.

### Wound care

Your wound will be reviewed and redressed by the hand therapy unit. Stitches will be removed between 10 and 14 days after surgery, according to how quickly the wounds heal. If you have any concerns about your wounds between therapy appointments please contact your GP.

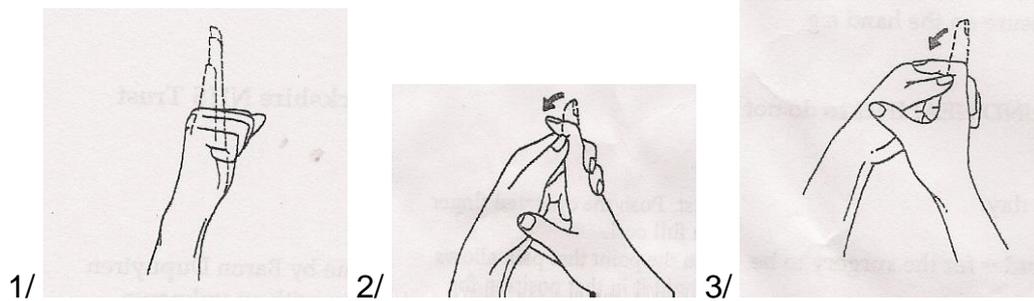


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After your stitches have been removed and the wounds are fully healed you should massage your scars daily with a non-perfumed moisturising cream such as E45 or Aqueous cream. This will help to soften the scars and prevent any adhesions between the scar tissue and surrounding structures.

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## Exercises



### Number One

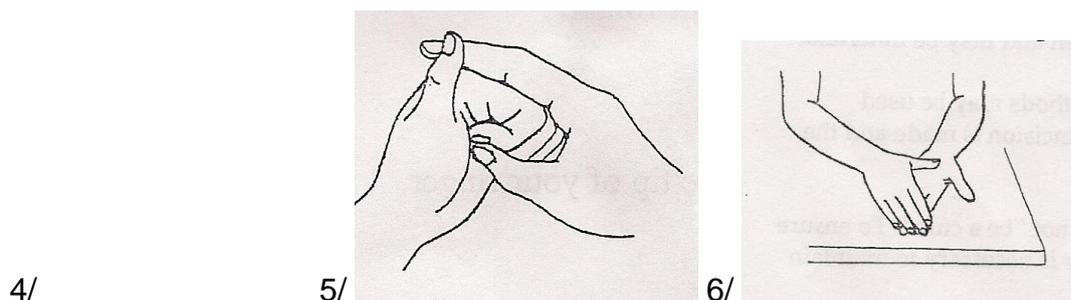
- Exercise into a full fist then straighten the fingers.

### Number Two

- Block below the top joint of the finger, slowly bend and straighten the joint.

### Number Three

- Block below the middle joint of the finger, slowly bend and straighten the joint.



### Number Four

- Hook and straighten your fingers, keeping your knuckles straight, for example, over a pen. Your therapist may progress this to over putty.

### Number Five

- Make a fist, push each operated finger into a full fist using the other hand as far as pain allows.

### Number Six

- Use the opposite hand to push each finger straight one at a time. Focus on the joints that are the main problem (as shown by your therapist)

## Further Information

If you need further information please contact your Therapy Department:

**University Hospital, Coventry and Warwickshire: Tel 024 7696 6016**

**Rugby, St Cross Hospital: Tel 01788 663257** For further information please visit our hand service web site <http://tinyurl.com/uhcwband>

The Trust operates a smoke free policy

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**Author:** Elaine Carr MSc MCSP - Physiotherapy Department **Published:** January 2011  
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