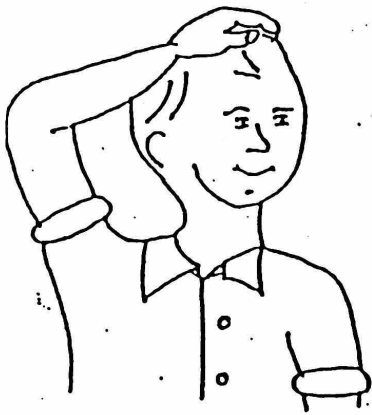


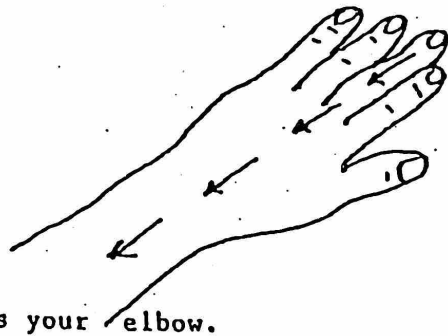
## EDEMA (Swelling) INSTRUCTIONS

When the hand remains swollen, from whatever the cause, undissolvable protein is deposited between the various tissue layers, tendons, muscles, ligaments. While soaked in the protein, all these tissues swell and become shorter and thicker, making them stiff and difficult to move. Edema (swelling) alone may not cause a hand to stiffen, but when it is accompanied by restricted movement, stiffening is inevitable. This is why controlling or decreasing edema (swelling) is a priority in rehabilitation of your hand.

The following guidelines are for decreasing the swelling in your hand:



- ✓ Keep your hand elevated. It must be higher than your heart for the elevation to be effective. This allows the fluid to flow down toward your heart. Resting your hand on your head is an easy way to remember this. If you visualize a drop of water on your fingertip, it must be able to run all the way down until it reaches your heart. At night, elevate your hand on pillows.



— Retrograde massage, <sup>lightly</sup> ~~firmly~~ stroking your hand can help push out the fluid in a swollen hand. The stroke must only go in one direction--from the ends of your fingers towards your elbow.

— Use the hand. Open and close the hand. Muscles pump the swelling out of the hand.  
*No heavy lifting!*

— Contrast baths -- Take 2 pans of water with a sponge in each. One pan is filled with warm water and the other pan is cold water. The temperature in one pan is no warmer than 96 degrees and the cold water is approximately 66 degrees. Squeeze a sponge or open and close the swollen hand in each pan for one minute and go back and forth between them. Start and end in the cold water. This should be done for 15-20 minutes, 3 times a day.

— Isotoner glove - to be worn most of every 24 hour period with removal for range of motion exercises and skin care. Remove immediately if the hand begins to throb or hurt

— Coban wrap - spiral wrap the swollen digits being careful not to overstretch the material and overlap too much causing excessive compression (Don't pull to full length of material - leave it with puckers). Remove immediately if the digit begins to throb and hurt or becomes discolored. Wearing time: \_\_\_\_\_

— Ice pack to the swollen area for 20 minutes with paper towel between ice pack and skin