



# TWIN CITIES ORTHOPEDICS

## Post-Operative Instructions for Elbow Cubital Tunnel Release

Dr. Nicholas Meyer  
Orthopedics & Hand Sports Medicine Surgeon

### What To Expect After Surgery

- After surgery, it is normal for your hand and fingers to continue to be numb for a period of time due to the local medication used at the time of surgery. You should begin to take the pain medication given to you, with food and on a schedule, before you regain feeling in your upper extremity. Pain after the local medications wear off is expected. After the first 48 hours, the pain medication can be used as needed. Please do not operate heavy machinery, drink alcohol or drive while using narcotic pain medication.
- You may use ICE to the elbow, as needed, but do not apply ice directly against the skin.
- You may have a sling to help support your arm while it is still numb. The sling can be used for comfort until the sensation returns in the upper extremity.
- You will have a small drain under your elbow dressing. The first day after surgery you can remove the drain. A gentle pull on the tubing will allow the drain to slide safely out from under the dressing. There may be a small amount of discomfort, but no pain.
- There will be a well-padded dressing on the elbow which can be removed the 2<sup>nd</sup> day after surgery.
- There will be small stitches or white paper strips called steri-strips over your incisions, please leave them in place until your first post-surgery appointment. After the dressing is removed, incisions may be covered by band-aids for comfort. Keep incisions clean and dry. You may shower with incisions covered. Please avoid soaking the incisions in a bathtub, pool or hot tub until seen back.
- Your first appointment for evaluation after surgery should be about 2 weeks from surgery. **If you do not already have an appointment in place, please call Dr. Meyer's care team at 651-351-2639.**

### What Can I Do Safely With My Elbow?

We advise that you avoid any heavy lifting activities until you are seen after surgery. If you work a heavy labor job, you may need restrictions for a period of time. We can address this at your regular appointment. You may lift light objects. As a general rule, nothing heavier than a coffee cup until your first post-op appointment.

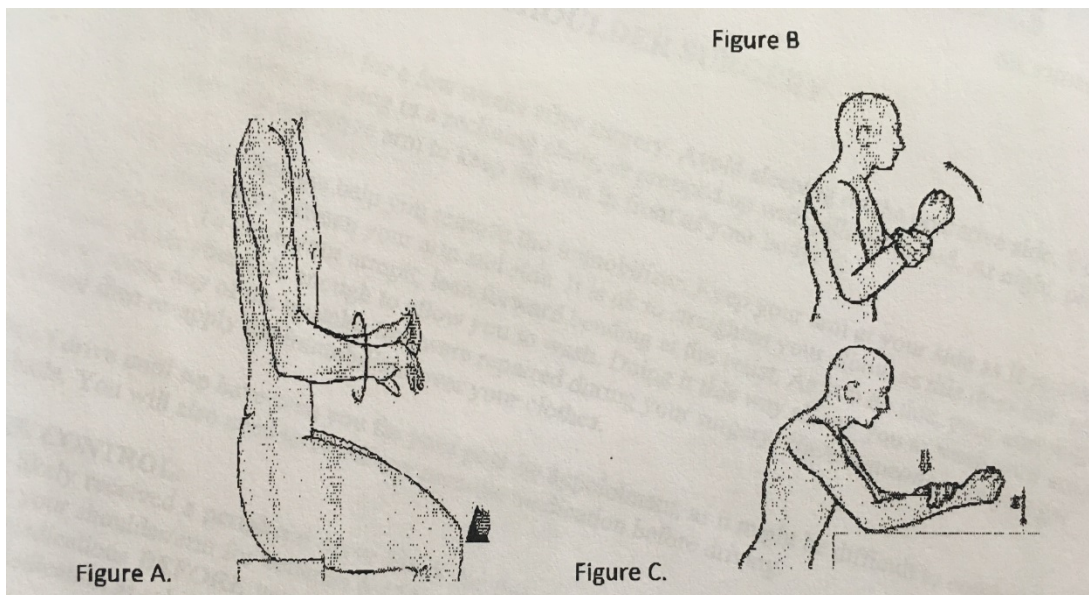
## When Should I Call My Surgeon?

- Pain is not controlled by pain medication or pain and numbness getting progressively more severe, including minimal use of fingers.
- Increased redness or drainage noted about the incision
- Fever over 101 degrees.
- Prolonged nausea or vomiting, difficulty voiding, or side effects from pain medications.
- Severe pain or difficulty removing the drain.

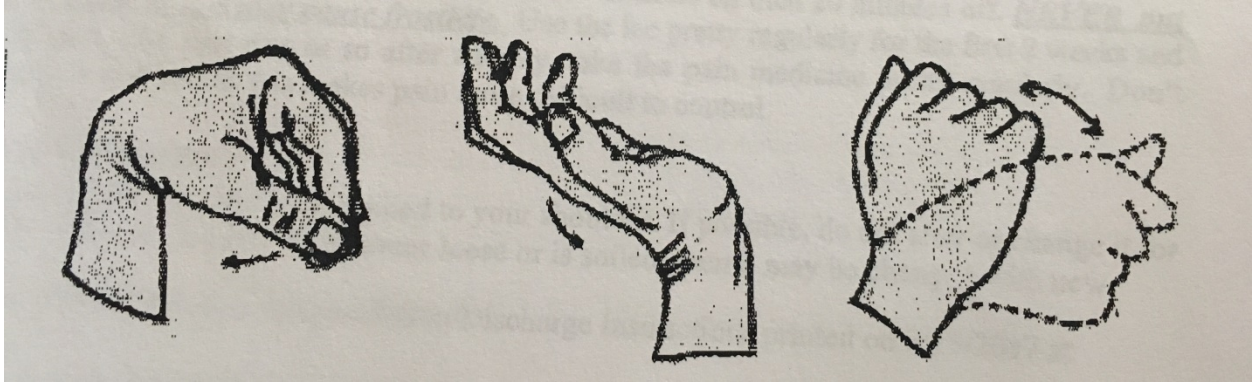
**If any of these items occur or you have any questions about your symptoms, please call Dr. Meyer's care team at 651-351-2639.**

## Elbow and Wrist Exercises

Working on very gentle range of motion exercises after surgery will help improve your range of motion and decrease swelling and edema. We recommend that you start slowly and gradually increase to perform these exercises 4-5 times a day, 5-10 repetitions each. We will discuss the plan for outpatient physical therapy at the first appointment after surgery based on the size of your repair, your activity level and progress.



- Figure A: Rotate forearm towards your body and away from your body.
- Figure B: Flex lower arm up towards your chest.
- Figure C: Extend lower arm until arm is straight.



Move the wrist into flexion, extension and side to side.