

When is the last time you had a team building session with your co-workers and you were wrapped up in toilet paper! Do you only color Easter Eggs with your children or do you get to enjoy it at work? How many scavenger hunts have you been a part of during work hours? Do you get to dress up for Halloween? When is the last time you made a Valentine's Day box? Well, just ask the staff who work at both Hand and Microsurgery and Columbus Hand Therapy. They never know what surprises or activities they may encounter over the months.



Team work all wrapped up

Our staff are professional, compassionate, energetic and yes, competitive. They can't wait for the next event. The patients are just as excited. It's contagious. Our employees have so much fun at work our patients request to schedule their appointments around the events. They want the interaction with our employees and are

included by judging some of our entertaining events. It's the culture an individual is seeking, it's the home away from home atmosphere that makes one feel appreciated. Each one of our employees have a special gift they bring to this organization and they contribute in their own special way. I am fortunate to be surrounded by fun loving people who enjoy what they do. I am fortunate to be their administrator.

If there is anything you do in life, make sure you enjoy coming to work because your attitude speaks for itself. You are the one who can make the difference. You are the one who can make changes. Be happy within yourself and the career path you choose. Life is too short not to laugh. Fulfill your childhood dreams and allow them to come out with whom ever you choose. I would like to leave you with a quote by Randy Pausch, the "Last Lecture" author who said "I mean, I don't know how to not have fun, I'm dying, and I'm having fun. And I'm going to keep having fun every day I have left because there's no other way to play it. Never lose the childlike wonder. It's just too important".

Rose Rosser  
Practice Administrator



Egg-cellent decorating

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# UPPER HAND

*Giving you the upper hand on upper extremity care.*

Fall 2008

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Welcome to the Inaugural Issue of "Upper Hand," a quarterly publication from Hand and Microsurgery Associates and Columbus Hand Therapy.

Autumn is a beautiful and busy time of the year in Central Ohio. Much of the equipment we use during this season is very hand-hazardous. Leaf blowers, log splitters, chain saws and wood chippers all have the potential to cause serious hand injuries.

Always wear protective eyewear and follow all manufacturers' instructions when using any power equipment and be especially cautious that gloves or clothing do not become entangled in the moving mechanisms of this equipment.

Remember that every finger plays an important role. Please take care of yours.

Here's hoping that the Browns, Bengals or Buckeyes will give you something to cheer about this fall.

Dr. Raymond Kobus

## Quotes

You can't shake hands with a clenched fist.

*Indira Gandhi*

Hold a true friend with both hands.

*Nigerian Proverb*

The impersonal hand of government can never replace the helping hand of a neighbor.

*Hubert H. Humphrey*

The best helping hand that you will ever receive is the one at the end of your own arm.

*Fred Dehner*

For your convenience we have a web site ([www.handandmicro.com](http://www.handandmicro.com)) complete with our hours, maps and directions, and patient information forms. If you bring the completed patient information forms, either from the web site or those mailed to your home, to your appointment, you will be entered into a monthly drawing for a gift certificate at a Central Ohio restaurant. Please remember to bring your insurance cards, Bureau of Workers Compensation Card, Drivers License and a listing of your current medications.

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## Firewood: Log Splitter Safety

It is that time of year again when people will be cutting wood to heat their houses or for those fun Fall bond fires. Safety should be top priority.

Wood splitters are commonly used for firewood or making logs for furniture. However, for most people, the only purpose to have a wood splitter is for cutting firewood.

Using a log splitter is and can be a very dangerous process if safety is not top priority. Below are some common tips that should be followed:

1. Children should never be allowed to operate machinery.
2. **ALWAYS** make sure there are no children present, debris can go flying.

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## Patient Story: Brian Jones

My life was forever changed on an August morning in 2007 while putting together a tire shredding machine. I was pulling the top of the machine cover back, which weighs about 3000 lbs., to work on the inside of it. Then the unthinkable happened. The safety pin did not catch, allowing the top cover to fall back, pinning me and crushing my left hand.



Jones

he had planned for my hand. He was truthful and up front, stating it would take many surgeries and therapy sessions to get back to my pre-injury status.

After a short stay in the hospital, I came to Columbus Hand Therapy where I met my Certified Hand Therapist, Kathy

I was able to free myself, as well as my hand, only to fall 13 feet. I was promptly rushed to Riverside Methodist Hospital's Trauma Center. This is where I met Dr. Paul Cook, the doctor in which I was going to place all my trust, in hopes of putting me back together and making me as whole as possible. He explained to me and my family what

3. **ALWAYS** wear protective gear (steel toe boots and safety glasses).
4. **DO NOT** wear loose clothing, it could get tangled in the machine.
5. Before use, read all the directions and owner's manual.
6. Make sure there is a safe perimeter around the machine.
7. **NEVER** make any adjustments while the machine is running.
8. **NEVER** operate the machine during the evening or night; always use during the day.
9. **NEVER** be impaired when operating the machine; no drugs or alcohol.
10. **ALWAYS** use on a dry surface.
11. **DO NOT** put anything else in the cutter except wood.
12. **ALWAYS** make sure the guards are in place.

Villacres. She tended to my wounds and after several sessions, much to my surprise, she was bending my fingers. Well, most of my fingers, my left index finger is missing. I just could not believe it, and my motivation to do more just kept growing. With each visit I wanted to do more and more. However, I often asked Kathy, "How long will I be in therapy?" or "When can I do the BTE machine?". In her own delicate way, not wanting to discourage or disappoint me, she would always answer, "Be patient, after one year and nine surgeries, you must be patient. Your drive and continued compassion to get better will help you to get to where you need to be... be patient."



Jones and Villacres

I am still a work in progress. With the continued support from Dr. Cook, his staff and Kathy, I know I will recover to the best of my ability. I can't thank them enough for their compassion and professionalism each time I visit.

## Scar Tissue Management

What is a scar? According to our Dr. James Nappi, scar is a 4 letter word - in more ways than one. Any patient who has had a traumatic hand injury would wholeheartedly agree with this statement. Many feel that a scar is the line of the incision left by the surgeon or the cut they sustained as a child. However, scar tissue is much, much more.

Scar tissue is made up of a protein called collagen, which forms during the biologic wound repair process in virtually all traumatic injuries. Collagen forms in unorganized layers in a process that can last from several weeks to months, depending on the severity of the injury.

Scar tissue will never completely disappear but the appearance can be lessened or remodeled in a variety of ways. A few techniques to help lessen the appearance of scar tissue include scar massage, vibration, compression wrapping (with coban or tubigrip), elastomer, or silicone gel sheeting usage. A hand therapist can help to recommend the best methods to use depending on the severity and location of the scar.

The scar tissue must not be managed specifically for cosmetic reasons, but primarily to maintain joint range of motion. Scar tissue can form skin or tendon adhesions and joint contractures if the affected joints are not moved through at least a limited range of motion immediately post-injury. The scar tissue restriction can cause a permanent mobility restriction if not taken seriously. A hand therapist can help to recommend appropriate exercises to reduce the likelihood of permanent mobility restriction. It is important that the appropriate amount of stress is applied to the healing tissue. Too much tension will create tissue breakdown instead of stretch and can create more scar tissue. Signs and symptoms of too much tension applied include significantly increased pain, an inflammatory reaction, or increased edema and stiffness. At times, scar tissue cannot be appropriately remodeled and surgical techniques are necessary for removal of the scar. A hand surgeon can best advise in regard to the available surgical options in this situation.

Edema techniques are very important to use following traumatic injury due to the fact that long-standing, significant edema can lead to fibrosis and increased scar formation. Elevation of the hand above the heart, not significantly higher, is very important. Excessive elevation challenges a damaged and repaired vascular system. Active fisting (if not against precautions) is a preferred method as the body's natural pumping mechanism to decrease digit and hand edema.

Other recommended compression techniques to be used after the vascular system has stabilized (usually 3 weeks post-op) include elastic bandages, compression gloves, elastic stockinette, manual edema mobilization, and retrograde massage. Edema may persist for up to a year, so it is wise to consider waiting 6-12 months prior to having rings resized.

Lastly, scar tissue is very sensitive and can be more susceptible to tearing or sunburn for approximately 6 months and should be protected appropriately. Sunscreen (or lip balm with 15+ SPF for smaller areas) should be used while in the sun for at least 6 months to prevent the scar from darkening as it matures. Also, gloves worn during activities with shearing forces are strongly recommended to avoid excessive friction over skin grafts and flaps to prevent injury.

Managing scars effectively requires a team approach including the patient, the physician, and the therapist. If you have further questions regarding scar management, please contact one of our therapists at Columbus Hand Therapy or one of our physicians at Hand and Microsurgery Associates for more information.

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## Injuries

- One third of all acute injuries seen in emergency rooms involve the upper extremities.
- Two thirds of upper extremity injuries occur to individuals in their working years.
- The most common disabling work injuries in the United States involve the upper extremities, accounting for over one fourth of all disabling work injuries. One out of six disabling work injuries involve the fingers, most often due to the finger striking or being struck against a hard surface.
- One fourth of athletic injuries involve the hand and wrist.
- Children under the age of six are at the greatest risk for crushing or burning injuries of the hand.

## What is an (EOB) Explanation of Benefits

An Explanation of Benefits is a form sent to you by the Insurance Company that list the services that were provided to you by a Physician. It will give you the date of service, procedure code, the amount billed, the amount allowed, and the amount to be paid to the Physician. It will also list patient responsibility which will include the Deductible, Co-Insurance and Copay.

Hand and Microsurgery Associates and Columbus Hand Therapy, LLC requests that this information be sent with payments to the appropriate company. This allows us to post payment exactly as the Insurance company designated which in turn will help you to understand your statement.

Services provided by the Hospital or Surgery Centers is a separate bill and are not included in our statements.

If you have questions about your account the Billing Department is always available to sit down with you to discuss your account in detail.