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DUPUYTREN'S CONTRACTURE

SHORT INFO

Operation time:	ca. 1 - 4 hours
Anaesthesia:	regional anaesthesia of the arm or general anaesthesia
Hospital stay:	ca. 2 nights
Presentable:	immediately
Sports:	after ca. 4 weeks (depending on the sport)

Dupuytren's contracture is a benign proliferation of connective tissue structures in the palm with nodules and chords forming in the palm area, but also at the fingers on the flexor side, which can lead to pain under strain, but also limit the ability of the fingers to straighten, mostly in the base joint, but often also in the middle joint, because of a contracture of the chords. The increasingly curled position of the fingers can also start to interfere with the hand's overall function.

Dupuytren's contracture usually progresses very slowly, but surgery is still clearly indicated if pain is experienced under strain and mobility is restricted because of the fingers' inability to extend fully. The operation involves removal of the fibrous tissue by way of incisions in the palm and/or on the flexor side of the fingers under regional anaesthesia of the arm or general anaesthesia. At an advanced stage, possibly stiffened joints need to be remobilized by loosening them or removing the fibrous tissue around them, and in rare cases the involvement of the skin in this will necessitate the use of skin grafts. At the end of the operation, a plaster splint that reaches to the fingertips is fitted to the lower arm and must be worn for about a week. The removal of the skin sutures follows after ca. 12 days, until which time contact with water is to be avoided. The hand will as a rule require intensive physical therapy after the removal of the sutures to ultimately regain a full range of motion for the fingers.