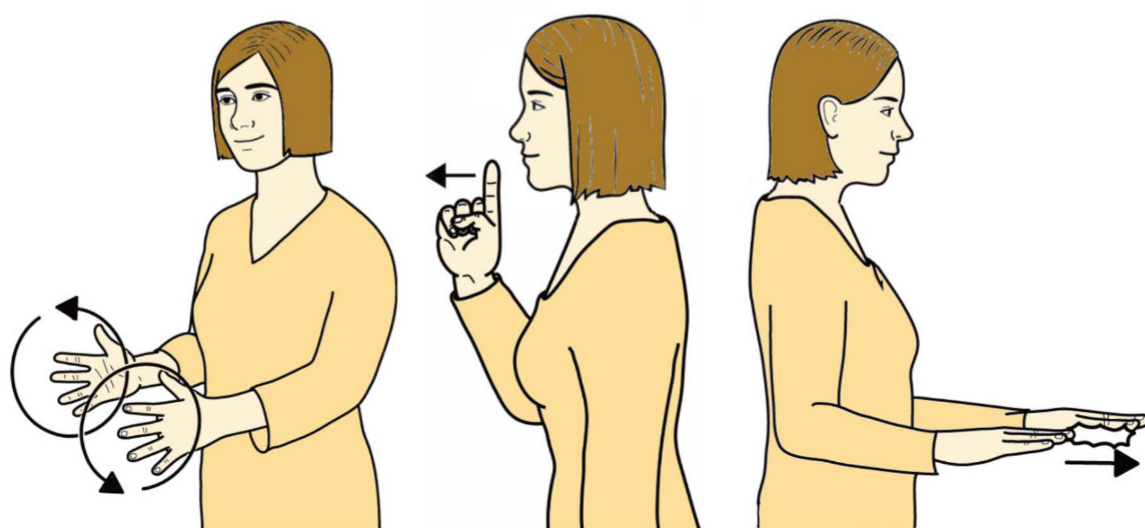


# Training Handbook



**Sign** the  
communication charity  
charity no: 1039788  
**along**





## **Mission**

**SIGNALONG is committed to empowering children and adults with impaired communication to understand and express their needs, choices and desires by providing vocabulary for life and learning.**

**[www.signalong.org.uk](http://www.signalong.org.uk)**

**THE COMMUNICATION CHARITY**

Signalong is a company limited by guarantee no 2922636; v.a.t. no. 661 9509 15

## **Introducing Communication**

What do we mean by “communication”? At what level do we need to define it?

Communication is basically two processes:-

- 1) the passing of information from one person to another and
- 2) the reaction to information received in order to promote an interaction.

There are several ways in which the first process can take place:-

- hand gestures
- facial expressions
- body gestures and poses
- cries
- vocalisations
- language - the most complex form

## **Acquiring Pre - Language Skills**

A very obvious point which is easy to overlook is that language cannot develop in a vacuum. In order for language to be acquired, the notion of communication must be there and it cannot develop without:-

- an interest in other people - the desire to communicate
- familiarity with the idea of one thing, (a sound, word or sign)
- representing something else (an object or idea)
- the ability to listen as well as hear
- the ability to use or manipulate the voice

Language impaired children may experience difficulties because these skills have not been acquired. It is important, therefore, that pre-language skills should be taught and encouraged in all language impaired children regardless of age.

According to Ann Locke, “Living Language”, there are four major areas which need to be developed before language can be acquired:

- social-emotional development
- play skills
- listening skills
- expressive skills



## Why Signalong?

The points of similarity between Signalong and other sign-supported communication systems are that they are key-word systems which use mainly BSL signs, and are intended for use with people who have language and communication difficulties mainly arising from learning disabilities. Because of the BSL root, signs for words which occur in both lexicons are usually the same, but there are some differences.

In other systems Core Vocabulary they use the same (or virtually the same) signs for concepts such as doll/baby, cup/drink, bed/sleep and look/see. It is possible that this arose because in the beginning they were advised by members of the Royal Association for the Deaf, and BSL users frequently use the same signs for these concepts, relying on context to aid understanding. Because Signalong was originally introduced to assist with language development programmes we use one sign per concept, one concept per sign.

There are some significant differences in presentation and accessibility. Signalong analyses signs for their handshape, orientation, placement and movement, supported by clear line drawings. This means that when they understand the methodology, practitioners can accurately reproduce signs from the manuals without having to attend additional classes or reference to a trainer. Others do not have this methodology, sometimes using stick figure illustrations with occasional text explanations which lack the precision of Signalong.

Signalong has published over 8,000 signs since 1992 and offers a much wider vocabulary, enabling a wider range of opportunities for users.

With the exception of symbols for sexual awareness, Signalong has not published its own symbols, preferring to work with Widgit Software on the development of their Rebus symbol system (now Symbols for Literacy). As early as 1995 our organisations collaborated to ensure that there was a Rebus symbol match for the Signalong Basic Vocabulary, and in March 2008 Signalong and Widgit signed an agreement on mutual co-operation in resource development, with the aim that there should be sign and symbol matches for all resources published by the 2 organisations. An additional advantage of working with Widgit is that they are UK agents for the PCS symbols system, which is less abstract than others.

In the case of students with ASD, practitioners need to have a great deal of adaptability and access to a wide range of communication methods and vocabulary. This is more readily available from Signalong. The Signalong methodology enable practitioners and parents to use the Signalong Text-a-Sign Service whereby signs can be accurately acquired in writing.



## How We Do It

**Signalong is based on British Sign Language, using unaltered BSL signs wherever possible. The difference between Signalong manuals and other sources of signs, apart from our much wider range, is the way that they are presented.**

Then the sign has been selected, a description is worked out. This follows a consistent method, as follows (don't worry, each manual has introductory pages with diagrams!):

1. Working and supporting hands are chosen. Some signs only require one hand, and in others one hand takes the lead. Signalong says that it doesn't matter which hand you choose, but you must be consistent. The people who need sign support for their communication may have difficulty in concentrating. If you keep swapping hands they may become confused, and communication breaks down.
2. The handshape will be given. Signalong has identified 26 ways in which a handshape can be described. The British Deaf Association Dictionary has a highly technical way of labelling the handshapes, but we use ordinary terminology (e.g. "flat hand", "bunched hand", "C" hand" etc).
3. The orientation of the hand will be given. Signalong users are asked to remember that palms face, and hands point. The instruction will be given in that order. It doesn't matter what the handshape is, if the book says "working closed hand, palm forward, pointing in", it means that the palm is facing away from the body towards the front (even though you can't see the palm) and if the hand were flat the fingers would point across the body, even though the fingers are curled over in the closed handshape.
4. Any movement will be described. This could be a direct movement, a broken movement, a movement which changes direction, or circling. The diagrams which accompany the signs are very useful here - please remember that you should read the instructions and look at the diagram.
5. The placement of the sign will be given. When signing, you should perform nearly all of the signs within an imaginary frame, which extends from the waist to just above the head and across the width of the shoulders. This enables the watcher to concentrate not only on the hands, but also on the other vital clues - facial expression, body language, tone of voice. Some signs may go outside the frame, often for emphasis.
6. Sometimes both hands will be brought together to form a combined shape, called a "formation" in the instructions. These will then move together to perform the sign.
7. Once the description has been formulated, a line drawing will be produced. We use line drawings because they can be produced without clutter, unlike photographs and more elaborate drawings. The artist focuses on the essentials of the sign including facial expression and body posture where relevant. Our artists depict the signs with a variety of characters showing different ethnic types, ages and genders so nobody need feel left out.

Once you have mastered the descriptions and the drawings, you can then select the signs that you need from whichever manuals they appear in (find them using the Global Index).

Please remember that Signalong is a sign-supporting system, which requires you to speak as you sign. Use simplified language, but speak in grammatical language. Signalong is not intended to replace speech. Short sentences are much more easily understood than long and complex ones.

Please remember also that Signalong is a total communication system, in which you give every clue to meaning which is relevant in the situation. While signing, always remember to use body language, facial expression and voice tone to reinforce the message.

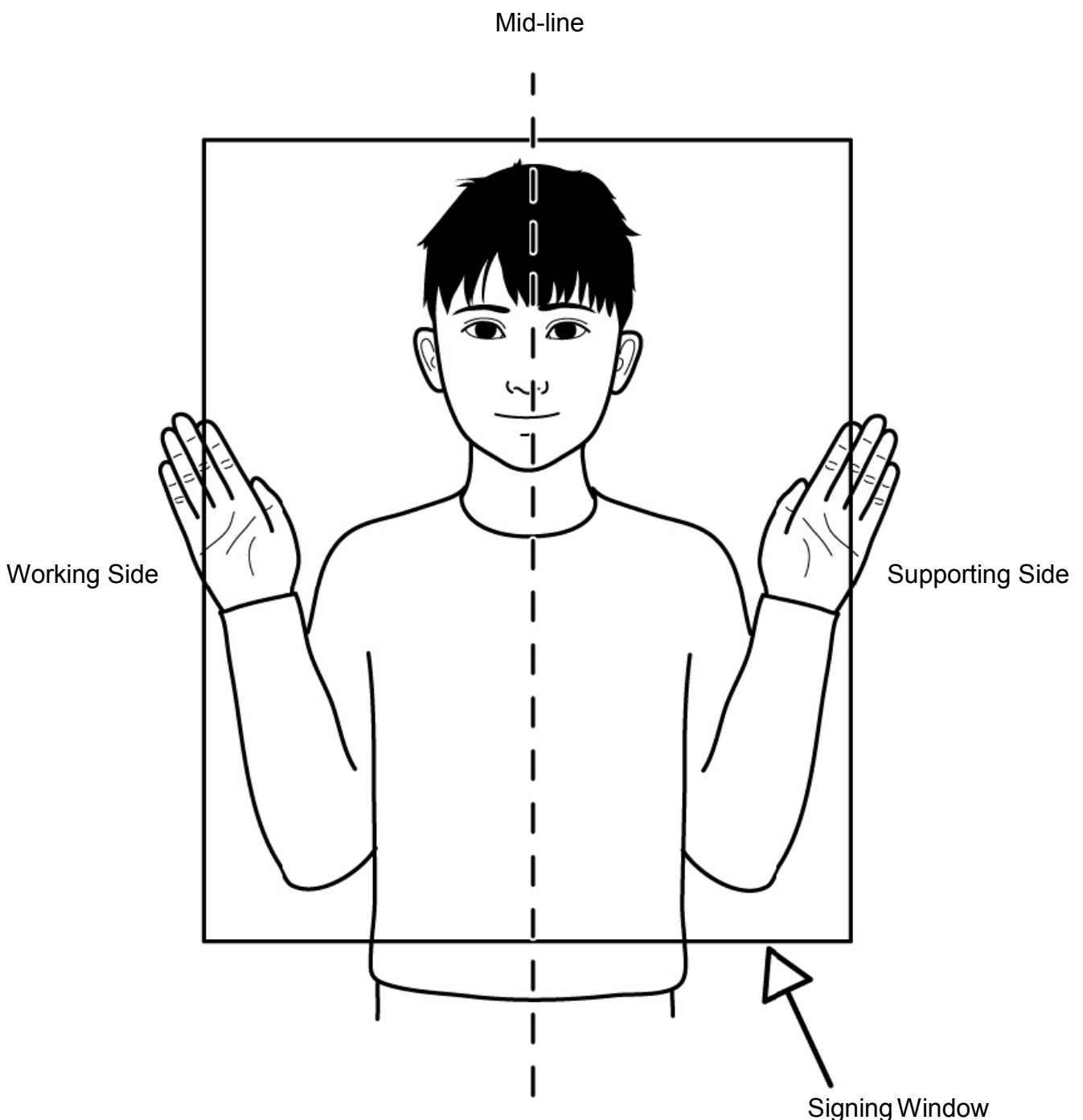
Don't forget that you are using Signalong because the person you are communicating with has difficulties. Don't flood them with language, whether in speech or in sign. Give them time to process the thought, and time to respond.

Very few of us are signing experts. Try to produce signs as accurately as you can, but accept whatever efforts are made to communicate with you. Don't demotivate the other person by insisting on a correct performance. In the end, it doesn't matter if the signs aren't perfect - effective communication is what we want.

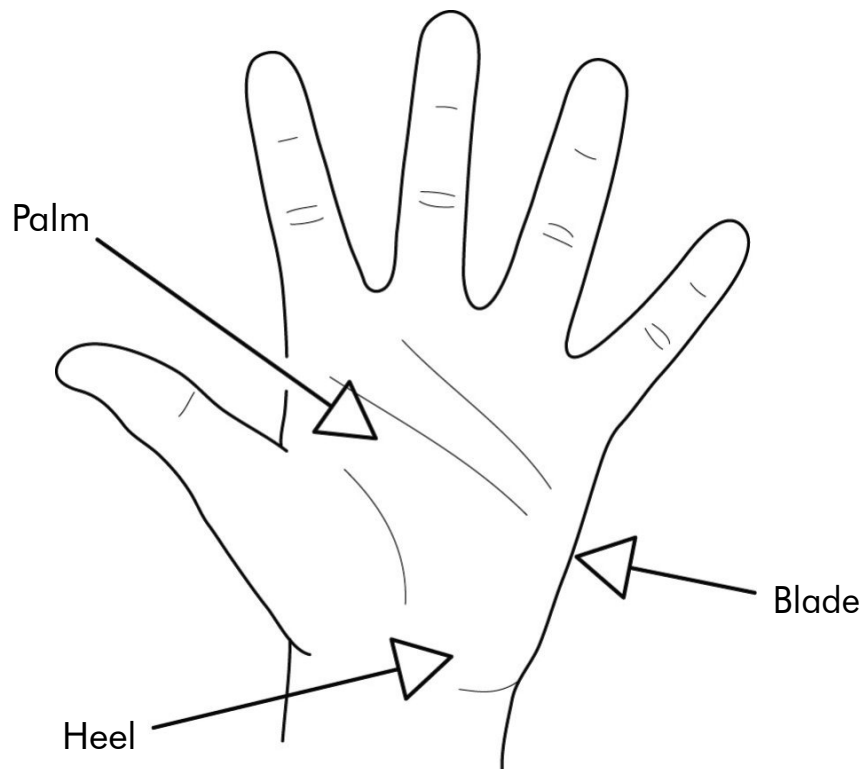
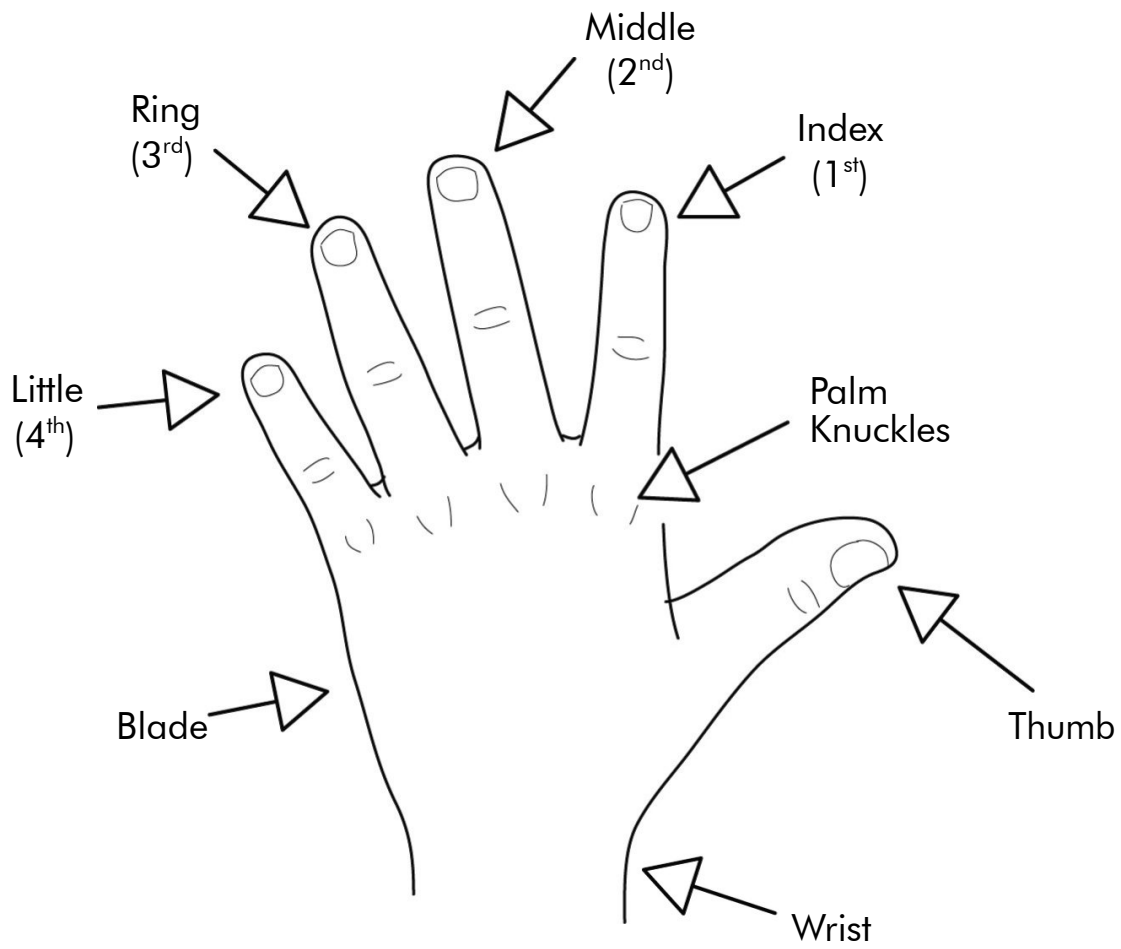
## PLACEMENT

All signs start within an area known as the signing window. This extends from the top of the head to the waist and from just beyond each shoulder. The placement of the sign can be used to add meaning, and sometimes moves outside the window. For example, signs relating to the ground or floor or low down on a person (e.g. "socks") would be signed at waist level or at the bottom of the signing window. Signs relating to the sky or ceiling would be signed at the height or at the top of the signing window.

All of the illustrations in all of the SIGNALONG manuals are performed by a right-handed signer. Because we know that there are left and right-handed signers we refer to the "working hand" and "supporting hand" – **REMEMBER YOU NEED TO BE CONSISTENT**, this avoids confusion and gives a point of focus to the person you are signing to.

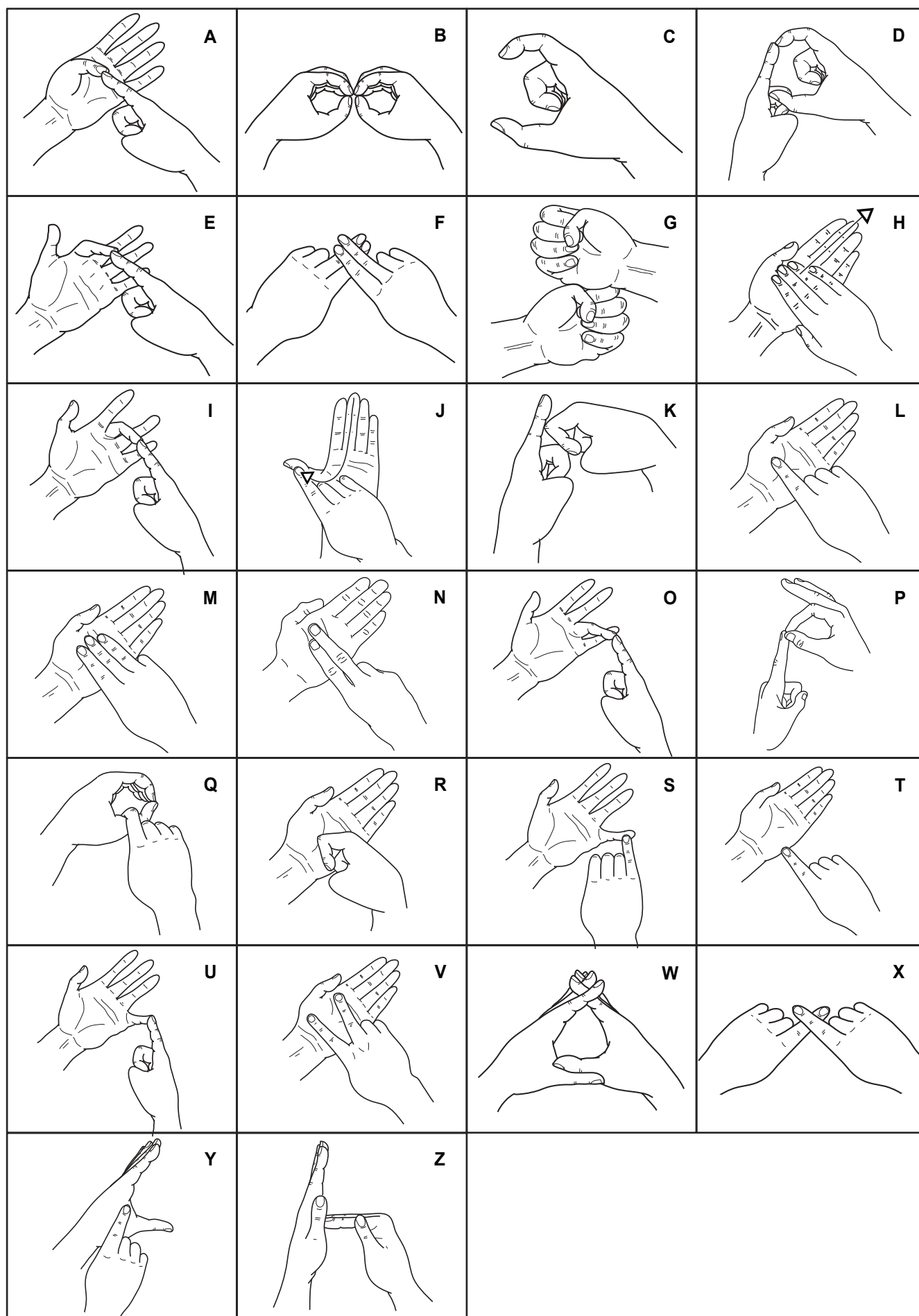


## PARTS OF THE HAND





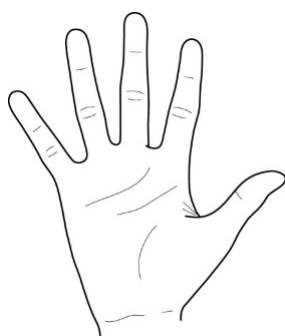
# SIGNALONG LETTER SHAPES – based on BSL



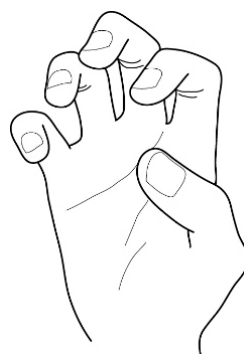
## BASIC HANDSHAPES



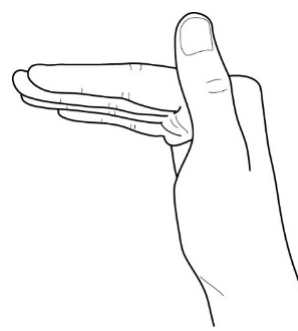
**FLAT HAND**



**OPEN HAND**



**CLAWED HAND**



**BENT HAND**



**CUPPED HAND**



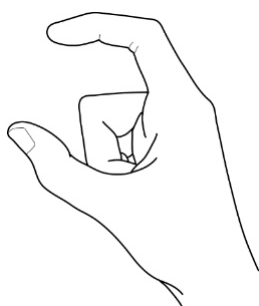
**BUNCHED HAND**



**CLOSED HAND**



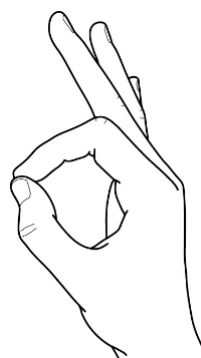
**FIST HAND**



**"C" HAND**



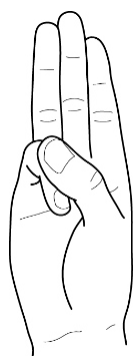
**FULL "C" HAND**



**"O" HAND**



**FULL "O" HAND**



**"M" HAND**



**"N" HAND**



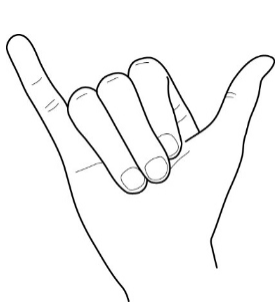
**"R" HAND**



**"V" HAND**

The last six shapes are based on the RIGHT handshape of British two-handed fingerspelling, but could also apply to the left hand. All shapes can be further clarified, e.g. working hand slightly bent, or loosely cupped etc. If a finger is described as extended it is generally understood that the rest of the hand is closed.

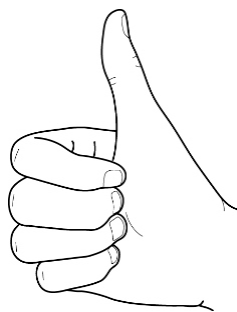
## ADDITIONAL HANDSHAPES



**"Y" HAND**



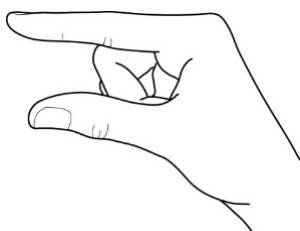
**INDEX HAND**



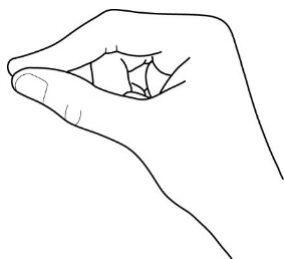
**THUMB HAND**



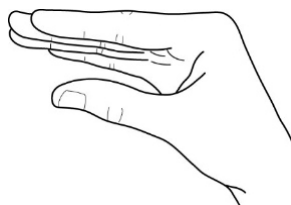
**LITTLE FINGER HAND**



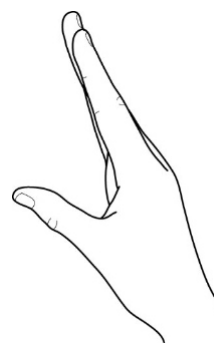
**OPEN PINCHED  
HAND**



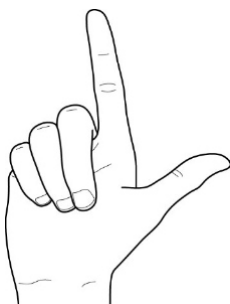
**CLOSED PINCHED  
HAND**



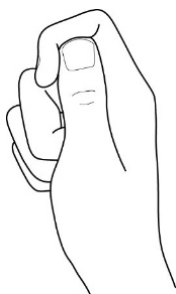
**PARALLEL BENT  
HAND**



**PARALLEL FLAT  
HAND**



**"L" HAND**



**TUCKED HAND**

## ORIENTATION

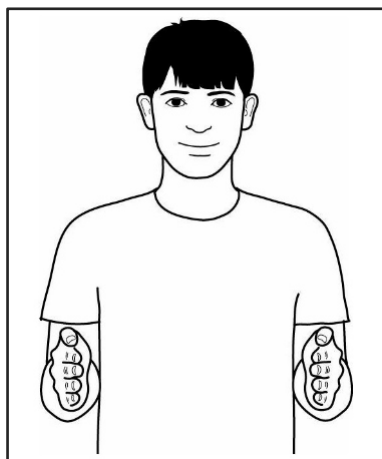
Orientation is a combination of **PALMS FACING** and **HANDS POINTING**.

### PALMS FACING

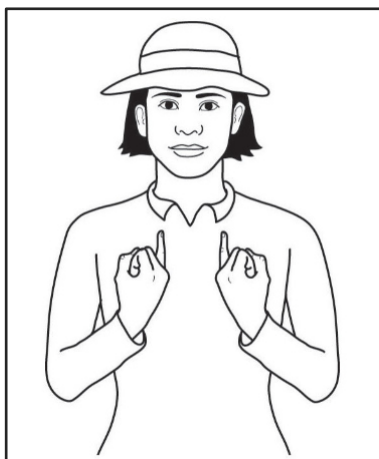
There are SIX directions that the palms can face, these are palms facing:

- **IN** - face the opposite side of the signing window
- **OUT** - face their own side of the signing window
- **UP** - face the top of the signing window or ceiling
- **DOWN** - face the bottom of the signing window or floor
- **FORWARD** - face ahead of the signer
- **BACK** - face towards behind the signer

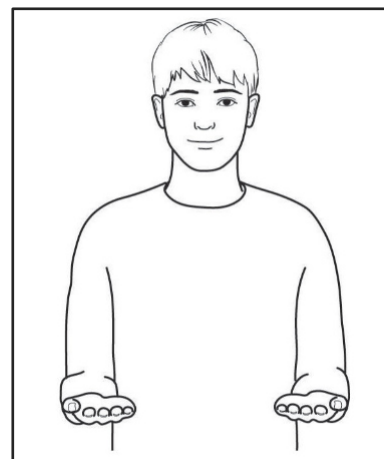
Remember, this is where the **PALM** is facing, and is irrespective of the handshape, if in doubt check using a flat hand before forming the handshape for the sign.



**PALMS IN**



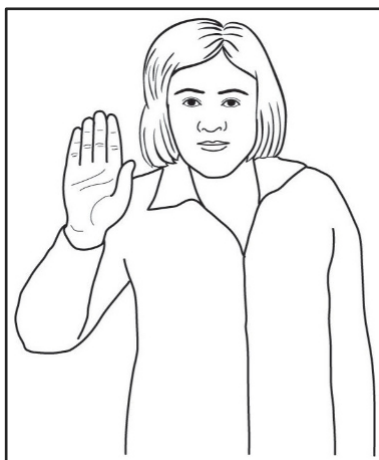
**PALMS OUT**



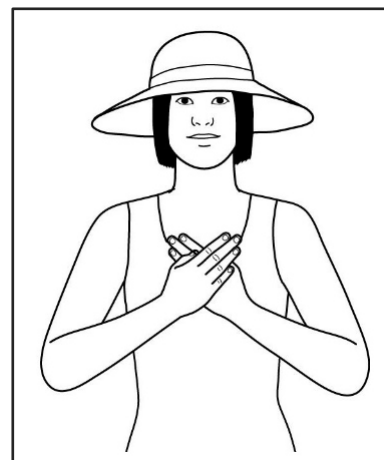
**PALMS UP**



**PALMS DOWN**



**PALM FORWARD**



**PALMS BACK**

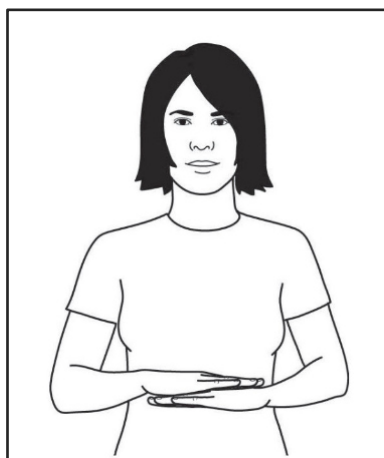
## ORIENTATION

### HANDS POINTING

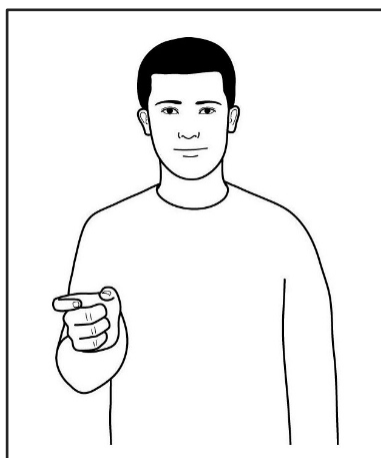
There are SIX directions that the hands can point, these are hands pointing:

- **IN** - points to the opposite side of the signing window
- **OUT** - points to their own side of the signing window
- **UP** - points to the top of the signing window or ceiling
- **DOWN** - points to the bottom of the signing window or floor
- **FORWARD** - points to ahead of the signer
- **BACK** - points to towards behind the signer

Remember, this is where the **HAND** is pointing (from the wrist or heel of the hand to the palm knuckles), **NOT THE FINGERS**, and is irrespective of the handshape, if in doubt check using a flat hand before forming the handshape for the sign.



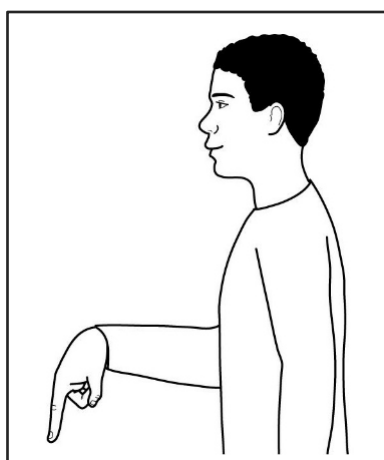
**POINTING IN**



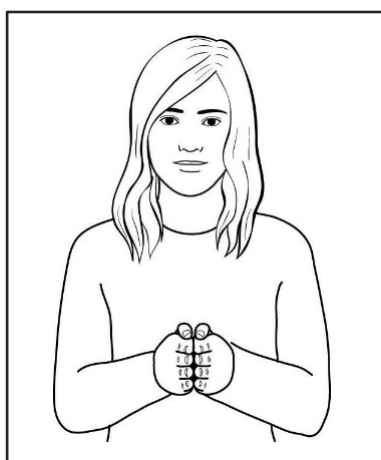
**POINTING OUT**



**POINTING UP**



**POINTING DOWN**



**POINTING FORWARD**



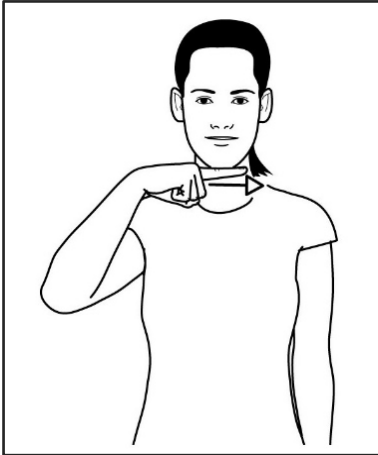
**POINTING BACK**

### DIAGONALS

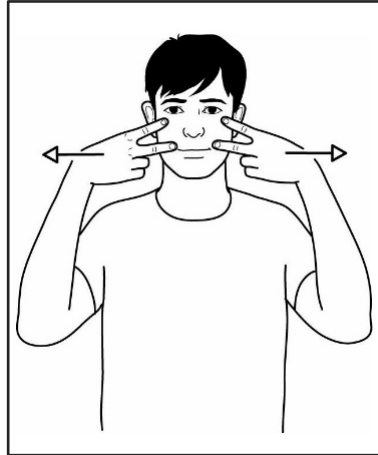
Sometimes an orientation falls between two planes and is described as a diagonal, with a “/” denoting the plane it lies between.

## MOVEMENT

Once the handshape and orientation has been described, the sign can sometimes move. Movement can take place in the same six directions as the palms face and hands point.



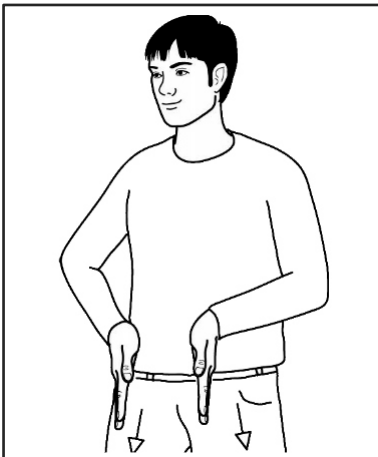
**MOVEMENT IN**



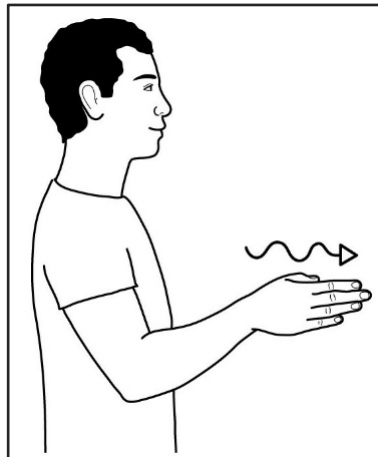
**MOVEMENT OUT**



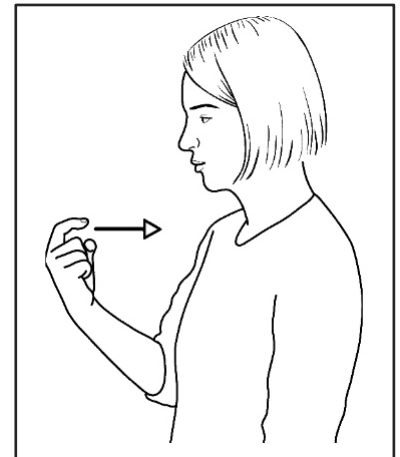
**MOVEMENT UP**



**MOVEMENT DOWN**

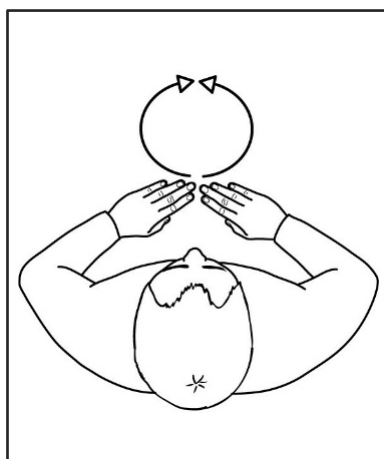


**MOVEMENT FORWARD**

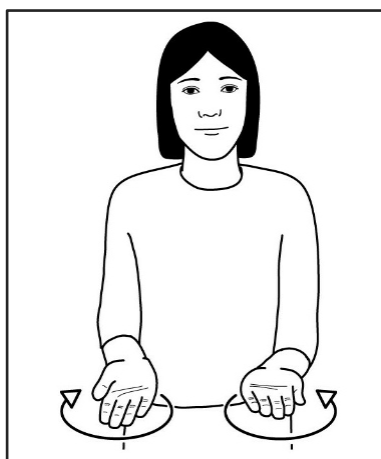


**MOVEMENT BACK**

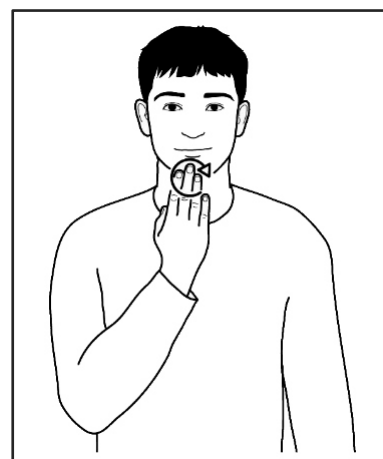
## CIRCLING



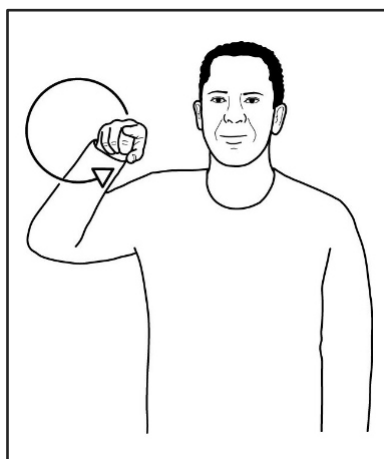
**CIRCLING IN**  
(HORIZONTAL)



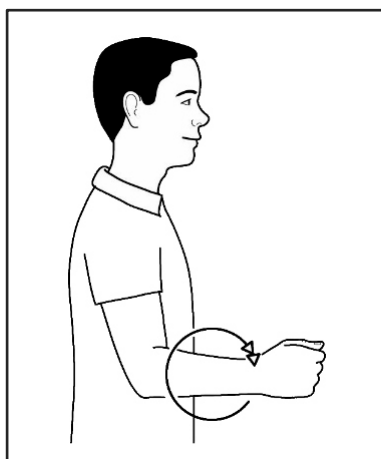
**CIRCLING OUT**  
(HORIZONTAL)



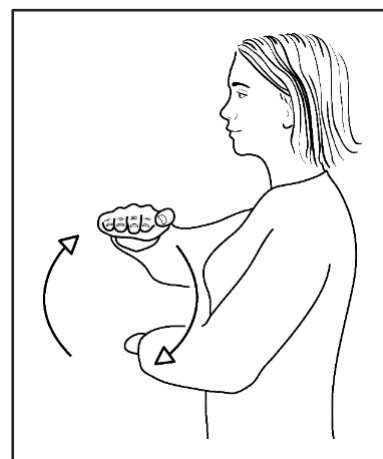
**CIRCLING IN**  
(VERTICAL)



**CIRCLING OUT**  
(VERTICAL)



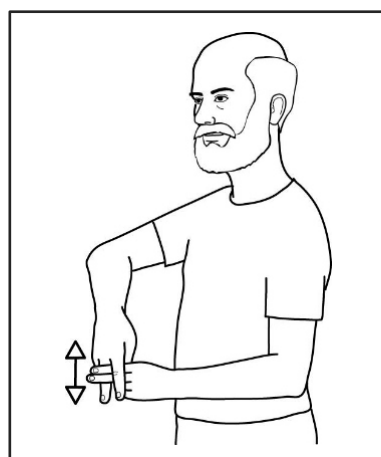
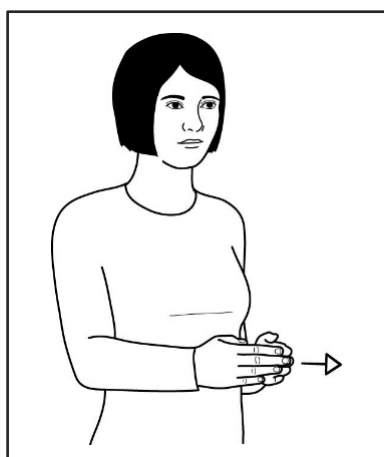
**CIRCLING FORWARD**



**CIRCLING BACK**

## FORMATION

A formation is when two hands, not necessarily in the same shape or orientation, move as though fixed together.



## GUIDE TO MOVEMENT SYMBOLS

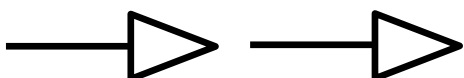
Basic arrow to show direction of movement



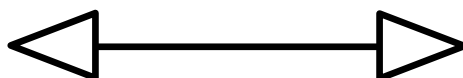
Hand moves backwards and forwards



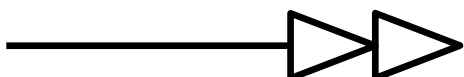
Broken movement



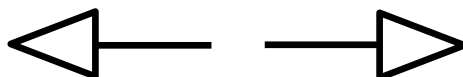
Movement in one direction and then the other



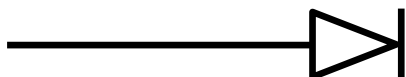
Repeated movement



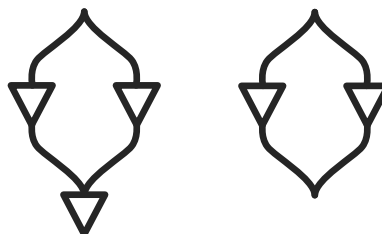
Hands move apart



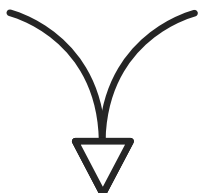
Sign ends with stress



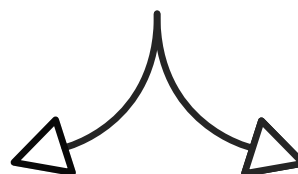
Hands or fingers open and then close



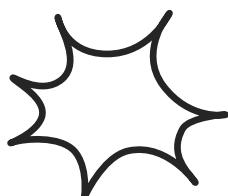
Open shape closes



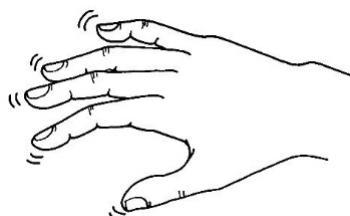
Closed shape opens



Contact on point drawn



Small repeated movements





## Name Signing

**The Springboard method is used to build a name sign.**

A name sign is representing/identifying a concept about that person.

There are four ways of creating a name sign. All start with the initial letter shape:

### **Method 1**

Initial letter shape then a sign for the meaning of all or part of a name

E.g. J + Brown = Jimmy      Or      Mr Brown, Jimbo etc

### **Method 2**

Initial letter shape and something you can see, physical characteristic

E.g. J + eardrop (earrings) = Jane      Or      S + Bracelet = Sarah

### **Method 3**

Initial letter shape and something you know about a person.

This does not have to be an occupation, it can also be a hobby or just something someone likes to do

E.g. M + Nurse = Mary

### **Method 4**

Combination of letter shapes.

Never use more than 3 letter shapes. These can be a combination of initials or the consonant sounds in a name

E.g. S + A + M = Sam      Or      M + K = Mike      Or      D + B = Debbie

## **How are name signs selected?**

Need to be sensitive when choosing people's name sign if based on physical appearance and appropriateness of name sign choice. Name signs are like a nickname and they identify the individual rather than their name itself.

Service users are very good at choosing name signs for staff and should be supported to select their own name signs.



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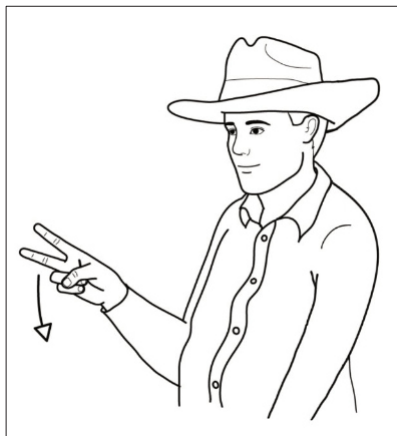
Descriptions which are provided free of charge still remain the copyright of Signalong The Communication Charity and must reference handshape, orientation, placement and movement. Where these signs are distributed out of the parameters of which they were supplied, Signalong must be acknowledged.

**[www.signalong.org.uk](http://www.signalong.org.uk)**

**THE COMMUNICATION CHARITY**

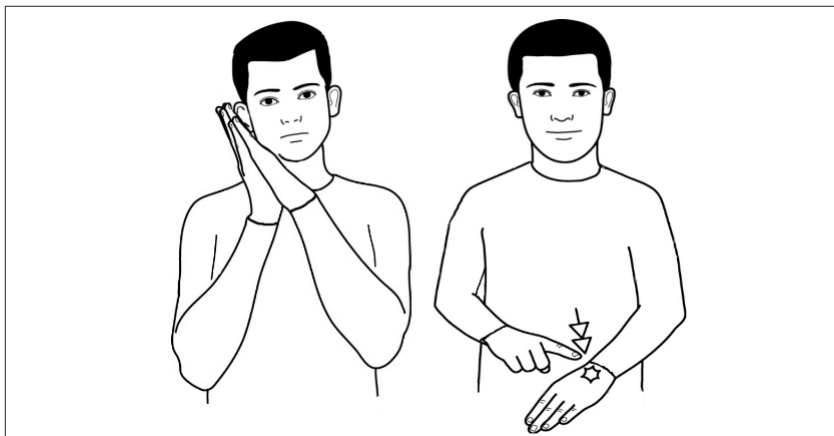
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## AGAIN



Working "V" hand (palm in, pointing forward) drops down from wrist.

## BEDTIME

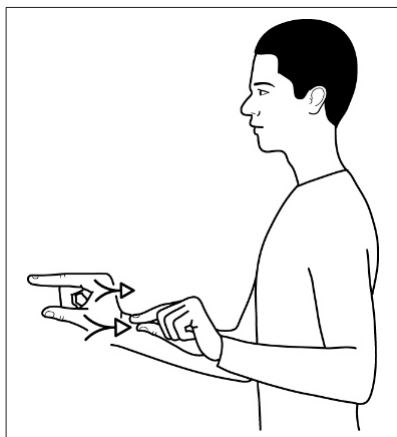


Flat hands, palms together, support head; then working index hand (palm down, pointing forward/in) taps back of supporting wrist twice.

**Directional sign.**

Diagrams, text & descriptions © SIGNALONG

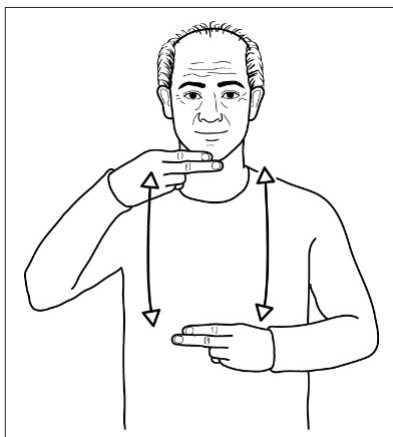
## CHOICE



Open pinched hands (palms forward, pointing up) move back to signer, alternately becoming closed pinched hands.

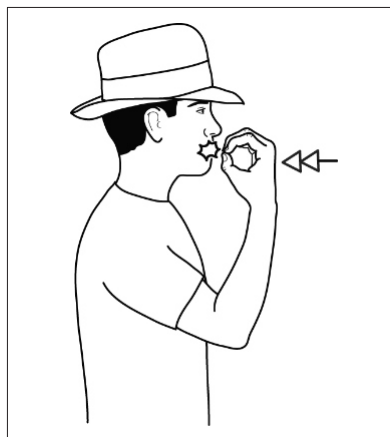
**Directional sign.**

## DINNER



"N" hands (palms back, pointing in) move alternately to mouth.

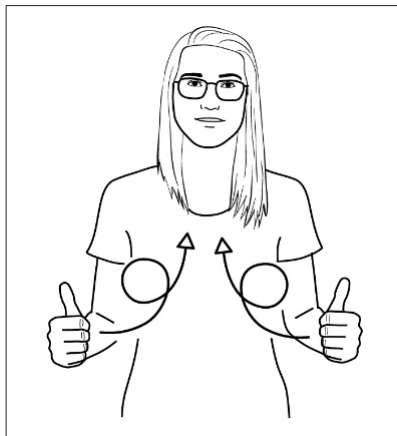
## EAT, TO



Working bunched hand (palm back, pointing up) taps twice at working side of mouth.

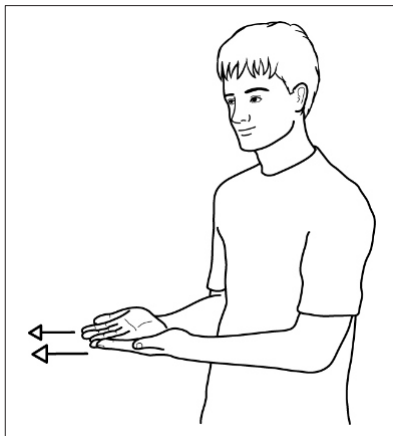
Diagrams, text & descriptions © SIGNALONG

## FINISH, TO



Thumb hands (palms in, pointing forward) circle out while travelling up and inwards.

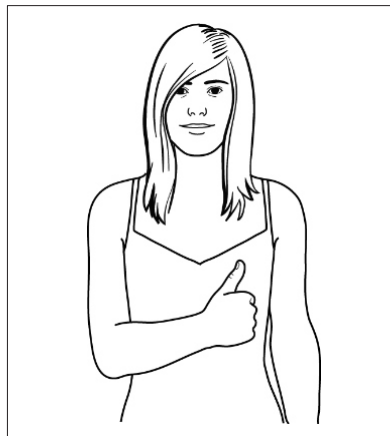
## GIVE, TO



Flat hands (palms up, pointing forward) move towards receiver. "Give me": hands move back to signer, fingertips turn to body (palms up, pointing back).

**Directional sign.**

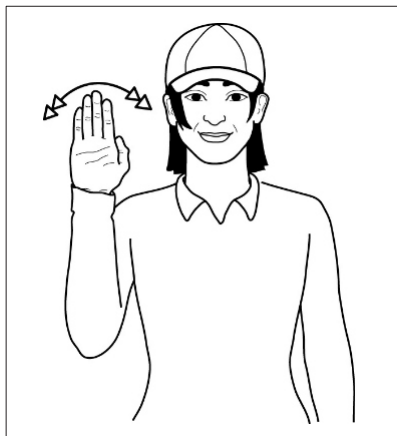
## GOOD



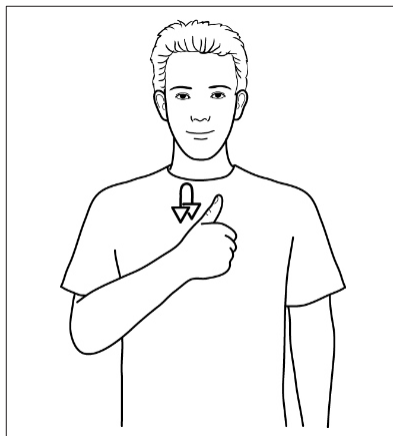
Working thumb hand (palm back, pointing in) held up in front of body.

**Directional sign.**

Diagrams, text & descriptions © SIGNALONG

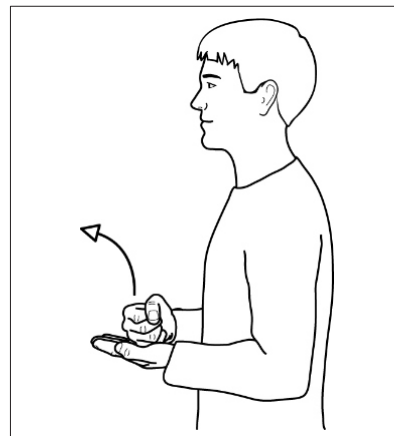
**GOODBYE**

Working flat hand (palm forward, pointing up) waves twice.

**HELLO**

Working thumb hand (palm back, pointing in) held up in front of body, twists backwards and forwards at wrist.

**Directional sign.**

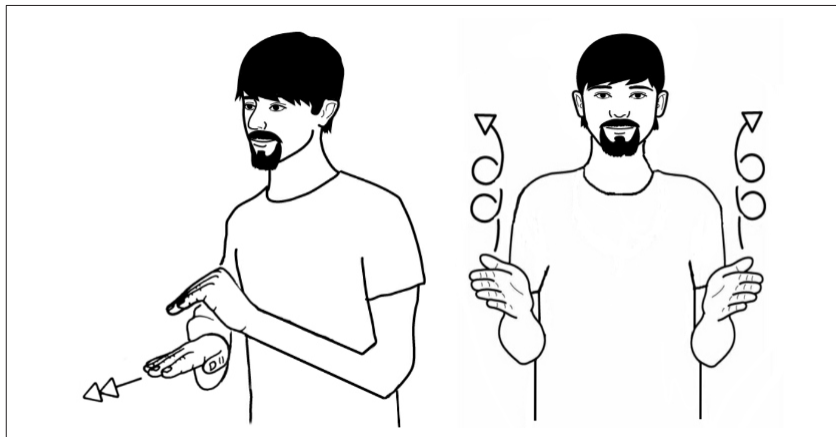
**HELP, TO**

Blade of working fist rests on supporting palm; formation moves up/forwards. "Help Me"; move formation up/back.

**Directional sign.**

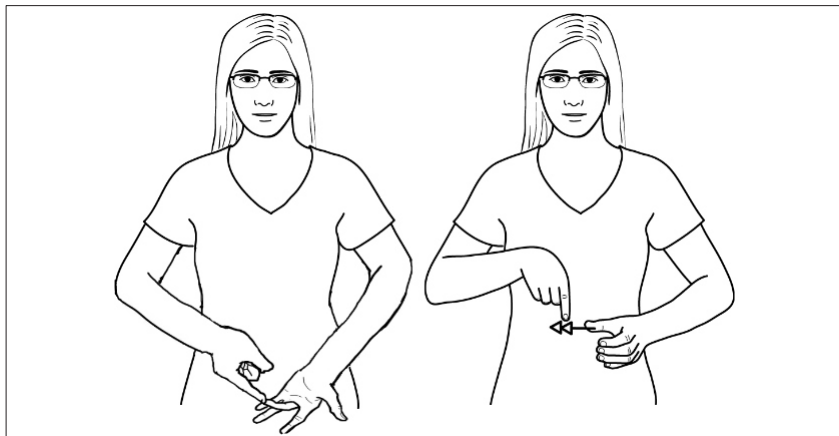
**I / ME**

Working index hand points to chest.

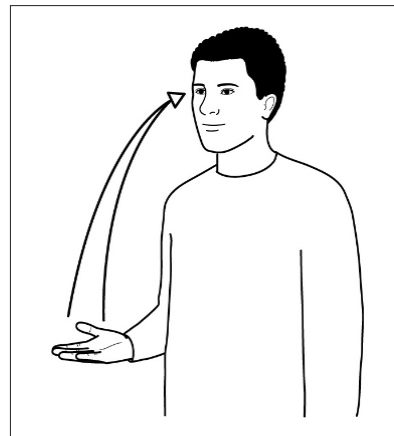
**INDOOR PLAY**

Working flat hand (palm down, pointing forward) moves forwards twice below supporting bent hand (palm in/down, pointing in/up); then flat hands at waist height (palms in/up, pointing forward/out) travel up while making two vertical outward circles.

**Do not flex wrists.**

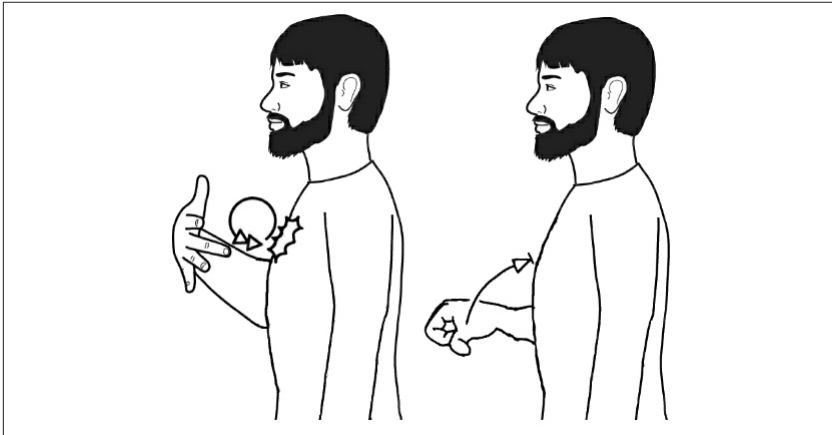
**I PAD**

Make letter shape "I"; then supporting wide full "C" hand (palm in, pointing forward) shows shape of tablet while working index hand mimes scrolling on screen.

**LEARN, TO**

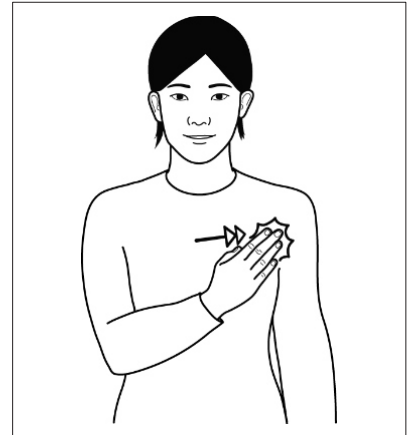
Working parallel flat hand (palm up, pointing forward) moves to working side of forehead closing to bunched hand (palm back, pointing up).

## LIFE SKILLS



Working open hand (palm back, pointing in), middle finger extended, makes small forward circles as finger brushes against upper chest; then working thumb hand (palm down, pointing forward) moves firmly up, bending at elbow, so that thumb points towards chest.

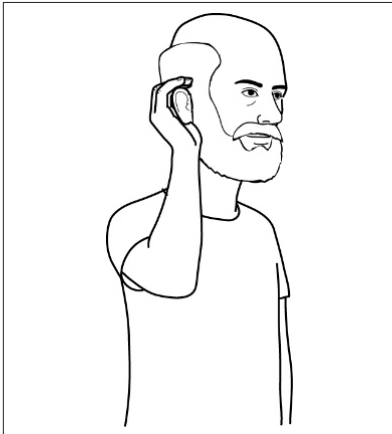
## LIKE, TO



Working flat hand (palm back, pointing in/up) taps supporting side of upper chest twice.

Diagrams, text & descriptions © SIGNALONG

## LISTEN, TO



Working cupped hand (palm forward, pointing up) behind ear.

## LOVE, TO



Cross flat hands over chest, working hand in front.

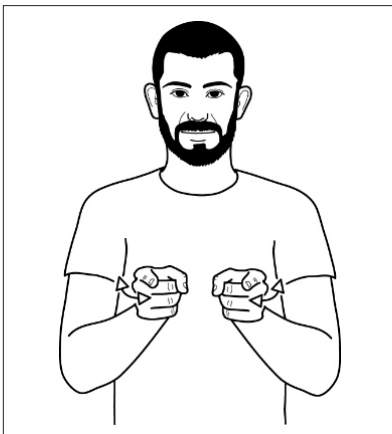
## MOBILE PHONE



Working full "C" hand (palm in, pointing forward/up) at working side of head.

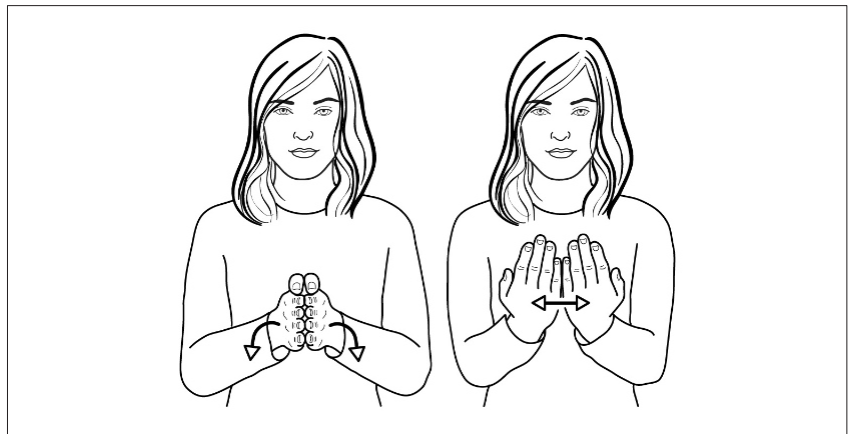
Diagrams, text & descriptions © SIGNALONG

## MUSIC



Index hands (palms in, pointing forward) make small outward then inward downward arcs, moving from wrists.

## READ, TO

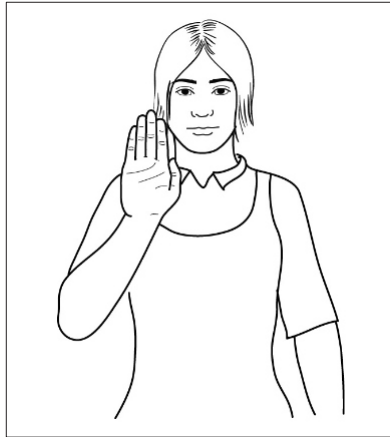


Flat hands (palms together, pointing forward) open to palms up, little fingers remaining in contact; then tilt formation upwards and move slightly from side to side.

Diagrams, text & descriptions © SIGNALONG

**SHOWER**

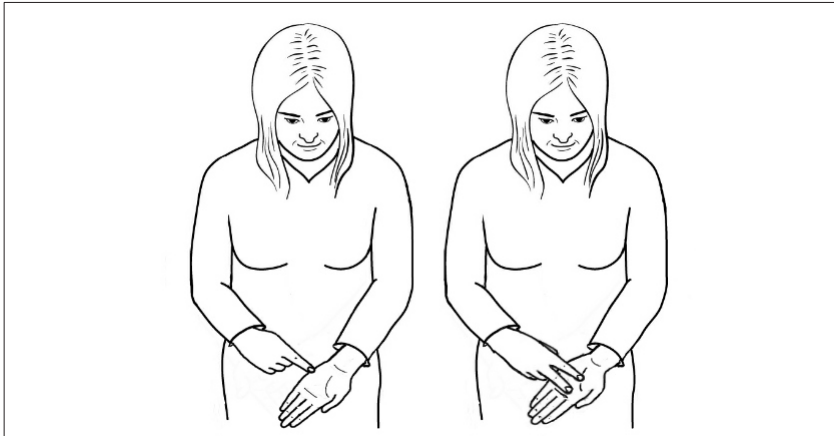
Working full "O" hand held above head, springs open twice.

**STOP**

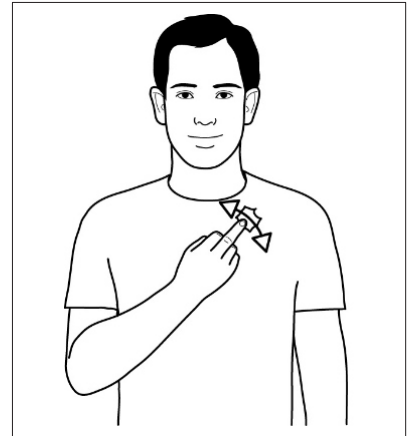
Working flat hand (palm forward, pointing up) is held in front of working side of body.

**TABLET**

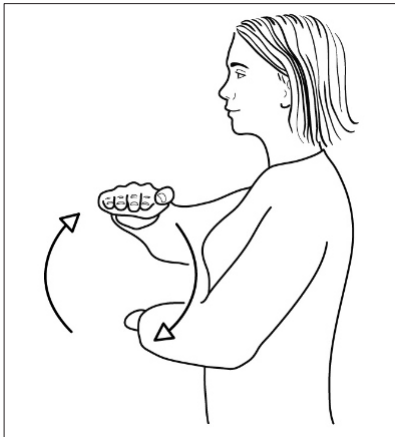
Wide full "C" hand (palm in, pointing forward) shows shape of tablet while working index hand mimes scrolling on screen.

**TELEVISION**

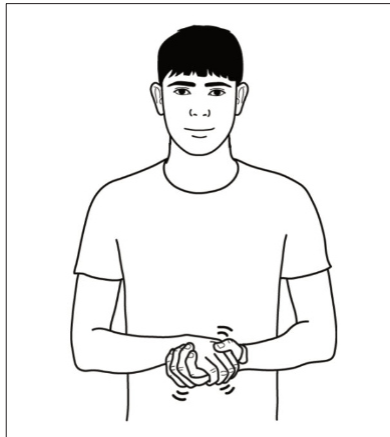
Make letter shapes "T"; "V".

**TOILET**

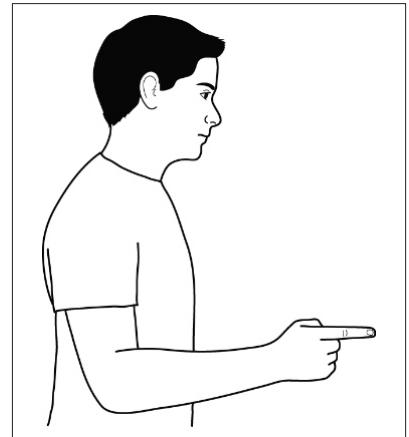
Extended middle finger of working hand (palm back, pointing in/up) brushes up and down against supporting side of upper chest.

**WAIT**

Flat hands (palms down, pointing in) working hand above, make alternate slow backward circles.

**WASH HANDS**

Mime appropriate washing action; use appropriate action and handshape.

**YOU**

Working index hand (palm in, pointing forward) indicates person.  
**Directional sign.**



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