

## A QUICK GUIDE TO WORDS AND PHRASES USED

**Abduction** - moving a limb away from the body e.g. lifting the arm out to the side.

**Adduction** – moving a limb towards the body e.g. bringing the arm close to the body from the side.

**ADLs** – activities of daily living e.g. washing, walking, cooking, toileting, shopping etc.

**Arthrodesis** – the fusion of bones across a joint space to eliminate unstable movement (e.g. shoulder or wrist joint).

**Atrophy** – wasting away (e.g. muscles waste when they are not stimulated by nerves to work).

**Avulsion** – tearing away (e.g. the nerve root has been torn out of the spinal cord).

**Axilla** – the under-armpit area.

**Axillary Nerve** – from C5 and 6. Serves deltoid muscle to allow abduction (lifting and turning out of humerus).

**Axonotmesis** – nerve that is stretched and damaged but not torn apart.

**Biceps** – muscle at front of the upper arm that helps to bend the elbow.

**BPI** – brachial plexus injury.

**Clavicle** – collarbone.

**Contracture** – resulting from thickening and scarring of the tissues supporting the muscles or the joints making them difficult to stretch.

**Contusion** – a bruise or injury to a part without a break in the skin.

**CAT scan** (computerised axial tomography) – a form of X-ray examination where the scanner moves around the body part and produces cross section images by computer.

**Deltoid** – thick, triangular muscle that covers the shoulder joint and raises the arm away from the side of the body.

**Diaphragm** – thin muscle below the lungs and heart that separates the chest from the abdomen and helps with deep breathing.

**Extension** – straightening of a limb of joint.

**Flaccid** – weak, flabby, lacking in firmness or tone (especially muscles).

**Flexion** – bending of a limb or joint.

**Fusion** – the joining together of two bones at a joint, to stabilise and limit movement (e.g. shoulder or wrist).

**Horner's Syndrome** – a nerve condition which involves a drooping eyelid, small (constricted) pupil and lack of sweating on one side of the face. The pupil usually remains small. This syndrome may be seen following a high impact injury to the brachial plexus.

**Humerus** – upper arm bone.

**Median Nerve** – from C5 to T1. Serves muscles that turn palm down and also thumb and finger movement (bending).

**Motor Nerve** – a nerve that carries messages outwards to bring about movement in a muscle.

**MRI** (magnetic resonance imaging) – a special technique using radio-waves and a large magnet within the scanner to provide an image of particular structures within the body.

**Musculocutaneous Nerve** – from C5 to 7. Provides biceps to allow elbow flexion (bend)

**Nerve Grafting** – when direct stitching together of the nerve is not possible, a length of another nerve is taken and a number of strands are built up to repair the damaged nerve.

**Nerve Transfers** – this allows for a nerve to be transferred to the end of the damaged nerve that has lost its connection to the spinal cord.

**Neurapraxia** – nerve that is minimally stretched or compressed with no structural damage.

**Neurophysiology** (often described as nerve conduction studies and includes EMG electromyography) - these tests measure how well muscles respond to electrical impulses and give us information about the amount of nerve damage and how much the nerve is recovering.

**Neuropathy** – any disease of the peripheral nerves, causing weakness and numbness (e.g. injury to the nerves that supply sensation/feeling to the arms and legs).

**Neurotmesis** – nerve that's been cut or stretched till torn apart.

**Orthosis** – an appliance, brace or splint used to provide support to a limb.

**Paraesthesia** – abnormal tingling sensations e.g. pins and needles.

**Peripheral nerves** – all parts of the nervous system outside of the brain and spinal cord.

**Phrenic nerve** – the nerve that makes the diaphragm work (starts at the side of the neck).

**Plexus** – a network or tangle of nerves.

**Radial nerve** – from C5 to T1. Serves triceps to allow elbow extension (straightening) and muscles that 'cock up' wrist and thumb and finger movement (straightening).

**Radius** – forearm bone.

**Scapula** – shoulder blade.

**Sensory Nerve** – a nerve that carries messages inwards to relay information about temperature, pain, touch and feeling.

**Shoulder Arthrodesis (fusion)** – this is reserved for unstable or painful shoulders or to help improve function. The operation is tailored for each individual patient.

**Spastic** – a tight, spasm like tone (especially in muscles).

**Tendon** – attaches a muscle to bone, helping with movement.

**Tendon or Muscle Transfers** – an operation to move the attachment of a tendon in order to perform a different movement. Various tendons can be used.

**TENS** (transcutaneous electrical neuromuscular stimulation) - used for managing pain relief. This is a small machine with electrodes, runs on batteries and stimulates the nerve endings in the skin, dulling the pain messages in the brain.

**Tinel's Sign** – a method of checking the recovery of a nerve by tapping lightly over the nerve to see if you experience any tingling sensations.

**Triceps** – muscle at the back of the upper arm that helps straighten the elbow.

**Ulna** – forearm bone.

**Ulnar Nerve** – from C8 to T1. Serves many muscles of hand and fingers to allow movement.