

American Sign Language for Equine Assisted Activities

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Introduction

Often, since one cannot physically see various levels of hearing ability, one assumes that various levels of hearing ability do not exist at all. In the “horse world”, and especially in the field of equine assisted activities, we have been quite unfair to deaf and hard-of-hearing members of our society. Picture the following scene in your mind:

It is a sunny Saturday afternoon at the local riding center. You, the instructor, have been providing equestrian lessons to numerous children and teenagers for years. As a child and her mother arrive, your mind flashes back to the hours of training and instructional experience you have had. The child appears to be a perfectly happy, healthy and typical girl, and her mother seems to be a typical parent. With your years of teaching experience, you begin to approach them to welcome them to your center using spoken English only to realize that the child and her mother do not speak English at all.

Confused, you notice that the mother gestures that she and her child do not hear. Then the mother quickly reaches into her handbag to pull out a notepad and pen to write something, and then hands over the notepad and pen for you to read and write. You begin to realize that they are deaf. Your palms begin to sweat as the following thoughts race through your mind, “Oh, dear – I’m not prepared for this! I don’t know sign language. How will I communicate with the girl? Most importantly, how do I teach her riding techniques and how can I be sure she is safe among the 20 horses I have?”

In the fall of 2009, I, a deaf mother of a deaf daughter deeply interested in horses, was contacted by NARHA, a nonprofit organization formed solely for the purpose of providing equine assisted activities and therapies for individuals with physical, mental and/or emotional differences, to teach sign language to instructors, physical therapists, and others in the field of equine assisted activities and therapies at a regional conference. Thrilled, I agreed to the assignment only to realize that there was a dearth of sign language materials that contain horse-related vocabulary. Although NARHA had a basic sign language booklet developed in 1976 by Robin Hulsey with the assistance and input of the Deaf community, it was out of print and no longer available to the public. So, I began working closely with a NARHA certified therapeutic riding instructor in obtaining a list of horse-related vocabulary and phrases as a starting point to develop a second edition of the sign language booklet.

Although I had watched my daughter’s riding lessons and years of association with my daughter’s lifelong friend and peer mentor, and her horse-loving family, all of them also deaf, I realized that I needed their assistance in developing the second edition. Along with my expertise in the sociology and sociolinguistics of deaf and hard-of-hearing people, the girls’ years of experience and working knowledge of horse-related sign language vocabulary and phrases contribute to the success of the second edition of the sign language booklet. With the horse-related vocabulary and phrase list, the girls and I set about to work on the booklet, taking pictures of the girls signing the words and phrases, and describing them in a language that can be understood by individuals unfamiliar with sign language.

As instructors and supporters of equine assisted activities, we are very fortunate to have this booklet, for sign language is truly an accessible vehicle of communication for the deaf and hard-of-hearing. Through sign language, we have the potential to teach the deaf and hard-of-hearing about the world of horses, riding, and performance competition. The goal of this booklet is to help make equine assisted activities more available to the deaf and hard-of-hearing and to improve the quality of instruction for those already involved. If even a small number of individuals are better served by this book, then it has met its goal.

Acknowledgments

On behalf of NARHA and all those who work with the deaf and hard-of-hearing as well as other non-verbal persons in the field of equine assisted activities and therapies, I would like to thank Petra Horn- Marsh and her two wonderful assistants, Renate Rose and Michelle Plummer, for taking on this project. Their time and dedication to this book has been incredible! What started out to be a simple “booklet” to be distributed at a NARHA Regional Conference has turned into an incredibly valuable resource to everyone in the industry.

With the input of others in the Region, I began compiling the list of horse-related terms to include in the booklet. The list was extensive and it was impossible to include every word and phrase suggested in this book, but through the diligence of Petra and her team, and a little help from the internet, there are over 300 signs plus the ASL alphabet, common handshapes and special handshapes to assist us as we work with people and horses!

I would also like to acknowledge that information included in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 was taken, in part, from the original book, “Horseback Riding for the Hearing Impaired – A Practical Guide and Suggested Signs” by Robin Hulsey. (1976) Thank you, Robin, for the initial effort in helping those of us who work with the deaf and hard-of-hearing to better serve that population in our equine assisted activities.

You have all truly helped us to “appreciate the power of the horse to change lives!” Thank you!

~Dionne Newton, NARHA Certified Instructor

Chapter 1: Techniques of Teaching Riding to the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing

Since effective communication is the key in successful equine assisted activities with *anyone*, regardless of disability, it is especially important in the case of the deaf child. Anything that you can do to promote more effective communication with your deaf students will make learning easier and more enjoyable, both for the students and yourself! Ideally, the instructor or therapist should become quite proficient in sign language. This will enable the explanation of detailed concepts, such as leads and diagonals, and will eliminate the “hit-and-miss” techniques for learning such concepts. Of course, it is not always possible for the instructor to devote the many hours of study necessary for proficiency in sign language. In such cases, the instructor should become as proficient as possible by attending sign language classes and by supplementing this knowledge with the signs included in this text.

With specific regard to the equine assisted activities with deaf students, there is no “magic formula” which will assure instant success. Any instructor for the deaf and hard-of-hearing should have an extensive knowledge of the techniques involved in their specific equine assisted activity whether it is riding, driving, vaulting, hippotherapy or mental health. Each instructor has his or her own individual methods of teaching their chosen activity, and this is as it should be! Hopefully, you will be able to combine your teaching methods with the following suggestions to provide a more effective program for deaf and hard-of-hearing participants. (*While these introductory chapters are primarily focused on teaching riding, the techniques and strategies offered are applicable to all types of equine assisted activities and therapies!*)

A deaf child is a child of eye (Veditz, 1910); their eyes are their innate strength, so when it comes to working with a horse, the child should take advantage of their strength by using their eyes to learn the techniques, look at and watch all movements and actions, and communicate with his/her instructor. Hearing and listening abilities vary child to child, so if the deaf child has no useable hearing or listening ability, simply call the child’s attention by waving at the child or tapping on the child’s shoulder.

Moving on to the visual aspects of teaching the deaf, the all-important thought to keep in mind is: *If the child cannot see me, he cannot “hear” me.* If you walk around the arena, turning your head as a sign and speak, the deaf child will have absolutely no idea what you are saying! When you need to give an explanation, first be certain that you have their attention. Volunteers can be of great assistance in training the child to pay attention to the instructor. In the beginning stages, the volunteer should direct the child’s attention to the instructor upon each mention of that child’s name. Eventually, the child will get into the habit of frequently glancing at the instructor throughout the lesson.

In order for this system to work, it is important for the instructor to remain in basically the same spot throughout the lesson. If the student has to search continually for his instructor every time he glances into the center, he will soon cease to look at all! The instructor should attempt to stay as close to the center of the ring as possible. Rather than walking around the arena to the student for adjustments or explanations, have the student ride to the instructor whenever possible. When you have the student’s attention, check to be sure that the distance between you and him is not so great that he cannot see your signs. If you cannot read his signs, he cannot read yours! In such a case, have the student ride to the center before proceeding with the explanation.

Due to the tendency for visual distractibility among deaf youngsters, a smaller area with few outside distractions (a highway, an adjoining pasture full of curious horses, etc.) is best. It is better and safer to start out with a small teaching area, dividing the ride in half if necessary, until the students can sufficiently control their horses. It may be necessary to have smaller classes (not more than four or five) because other children are an additional distraction. Also, the communication difficulties make large classes absolutely frustrating and exhausting! With deaf students, it is especially important to teach independent control as soon as possible, even more so than with other type of disabilities.

There is a simple example for this; in times of difficulty (such as a runaway horse), you can still relay verbal instructions to a child with another type of disability in order to restore control. In the case of the deaf child, you are reduced to almost nothing in the way of communication, unless you can keep up with the horse! The child must be able to apply learned concepts independently in order to restore control.

On the subject of emergency situations, there are a number of actions which the instructor should take, especially if the rider is unable to restore control. First, be sure to warn the other riders of the situation, as they may be unaware of its occurrence. Instruct them to stop their horses or ride into the center, if they can do so, *safely*. Attempt to calm the misbehaving horse with your voice. If possible, position yourself so that the rider can see you; then *you* perform the movements which you want the rider to carry out. The rider will, in all probability, imitate you, and hopefully, this will bring the horse under control. At this point, you must explain to the rider (and later, to the remainder of the class) exactly what happened, why it happened, and how to prevent its reoccurrence. NEVER assume that a deaf child understands the situation; ALWAYS explain everything thoroughly and encourage him to ask questions if he does not understand. *Most deaf children go through life in a constant state of confusion*. They often do not understand what is going on around them, even though they may appear to. Deaf children get into the habit of smiling and nodding their heads in agreement just to avoid embarrassing confrontations with persons whose speech they cannot understand. If you, as the instructor, take the time and have the courtesy to explain concepts to the deaf child, his progress will probably amaze you!

In some situations, a simple explanation is not sufficient; for example, in teaching the concept of diagonals. Do not attempt to “take a short cut in communication” by telling the deaf student to read the chapter on diagonals in your favorite horse book! You may think to yourself, *if he reads the explanation in the book, he will understand it better than my explanation*. Unfortunately, this plan will almost surely backfire. The instructor needs to realize that deaf individuals do not have a complete auditory access to the spoken English. Because of this factor, the deaf need to be directly taught how to read and write English; however, in order to learn written English as a second language, they need to have a first language base in American Sign Language (ASL). Unfortunately, the majority of deaf persons do not have access to an early fluent communication in their first years of life, a normal language development, and/or an appropriate education in a language rich environment. The instructor will need to take these into consideration and find out from the child’s parents and the child on his/her communication abilities at the first lesson. Also, it is important for the instructor to realize that even though the deaf student may have limited comprehension of written words or their sequence in a book, it does not mean he/she cannot grasp the concept itself.

In such cases, it will be necessary to introduce the concept by having the instructor or assistant demonstrate on horseback, with a simultaneous explanation. Demonstration is a very efficient technique in teaching the deaf, and it should be used constantly to introduce and reinforce concepts. A very important through to keep in mind is that deaf children will imitate you *exactly*. Due to their keen powers of observation, they will notice and mimic even slight exaggerations. For example, if you give the sign for “whoa” by pulling up on your reins up to your chin, the children will do the same! Your signs must be very definite and exact, or they will be the source of much confusion for the class.

The facial expression of the instructor can also be very instrumental in the teaching plan. Since facial expressions must replace the inflections and intonations of the voice, they must relay your enthusiasm, happiness, or displeasure to the students. Above all, facial expressions must be sincere, for you will lose all rapport with your perceptive students if they are not.

Two particular problems often associated with deafness are of special interest to those who teach riding. The first of these problems is the disturbed sense of balance found in many deaf individuals. This is due to the proximity of the semicircular canals to the hearing mechanisms in the inner ear. Be sure to double check each student's medical form for any evidence of a diminished vestibular function, and plan the lessons accordingly.

The second problem with deafness is a sense of rhythm, or rather, the lack of a fully developed sense as found in most hearing persons. You are probably wondering to yourself, *I'm a riding teacher, not a music teacher. What does a sense of rhythm have to do with riding?!* If you have ever attempted to teach a deaf child to post at the trot, you already know the answer to that question!

Think back to the first time you learned to post (assuming that you have normal hearing). Your instructor stood in the middle of the ring, chanting, "Up, down, up, down." Hopefully, you were able to synchronize the chants of your instructor with the two beats of the trot, hoisting yourself up and down in time with the whole thing! You did not need to watch your teacher or the horse's legs, but could concentrate solely on hearing and feeling the distinct two-beat gait of your horse. Obviously, it is not quite so easy for the deaf student to learn to post. Deaf children have a diminished and distorted sense of rhythm because that is the manner in which they hear, if and when they hear at all. Once again, the instructor should resort to demonstration, emphasizing the distinct two beats of the gait. As she is posting, she should sign, "Up, down, up, down, one, two, one, two..." frequently pointing to the horse's legs to further emphasize the relationship.

Before attempting to post at the trot, the rider should practice posting at the walk. Your most valuable aids during this stage are the cavaletti. Four cavaletti should be arranged in a straight line with a distance between each one of approximately three and one-half (3 ½) feet. The distance should be adjusted so that the horse will take one step at a walk between each cavaletti. This will encourage the student to rise with every *other* stride rather than every stride or every third stride. The instructor should stand near the cavaletti and sign "Up" as the horse steps *over* the cavaletti and "Down" as he steps *between* them. This combined use of cavaletti and signing helps reinforce the distinct two beats of the trot. It will probably be necessary to return frequently to this aid in order to reinforce the deaf child's sense of timing and rhythm.

Upon the student's first attempts at posting the trot, the instructor should run alongside the horse, signing, "Up, down, up, down, one, two..." It will probably be necessary to use your other hand to hoist the child up and down in unison with the beats. With larger children and adults, the instructor will have to push the rider up by the seat at the proper times. Gradually, the instructor can take away the physical prompts, continuing only the signing, "Up, down..." Eventually, the child will catch on; and if it is any consolation for the hard work involved, the child rarely loses this sense of rhythm once he acquires it! Incidentally, out of 60 deaf students in the Riding High, Inc. program, aged 4-21, one particular child picked up the technique of posting almost immediately. Only later was it discovered that this 7-year-old deaf girl, with a profound hearing loss, had been taking piano lessons for quite some time. Her well-developed sense of rhythm made learning to post much easier for her than for her classmates.

At the beginning of this chapter, it was stated that there is no "magic formula" to assure success in teaching riding to the deaf. In actuality, the closest thing to "magic" is the proficient use of sign language and the understanding of deafness which comes through continuous involvement with the Deaf Community.

Chapter 2: Utilization of the Signs

As the major portion of this text is devoted to horse-related signs, it is entirely possible to jump to the conclusion that memorization of these signs constitutes “mastery” of sign language. However, nothing could be further from the truth! Without the prior knowledge of sign language and its linguistic structure, the signs in this text will be ineffectual. The purpose of this book is simply to give the practitioner some of the necessary horse-related vocabulary which cannot be learned elsewhere due to its specialized content. In order to fully utilize these signs, it will be necessary to first acquire a certain degree of proficiency in American Sign Language (ASL) through enrollment in a course and/or involvement within the Deaf Community. Hopefully, this book can be of great assistance to those who use it according to its original purpose ... that of a supplement to other sign books and classes, NEVER as a substitute.

In order to communicate successfully with a deaf or hard-of-hearing rider, it is essential that student and teacher “speak the same language.” Suffice it to say that there are several types or modes of manual communication; therefore, it is imperative that the instructor learn to communicate via the mode which is native to the student. It is a good idea to inquire of the deaf child’s parents or classroom teacher as to the type of signs used and which sign book they recommend as a reference. They may also be able to recommend a course in ASL which would best suit your needs.

The original signs in this text were created under the context of “the most beneficial for the majority.” Of course, there may be those who will disagree with particular choices of signs. However, these signs are the result of three years of trial-and-error, as well as a considerable amount of input from deaf persons throughout the United States. The signs included in the text were chosen on the basis of clarity in meaning and lack of confusion with already existing signs, as well as their success rate with deaf riders.

An important thought to keep in mind is that many of the signs in this book are not universally or even locally understood by deaf children or adults, as yet. Although the individual may understand the concept of “saddle,” know what it is used for, and perhaps, how to spell it, he will be unfamiliar with the sign for “saddle,” since until now there has been no sign in existence. This sign must be *taught*, especially to the deaf child (who possibly has never been exposed to a saddle), so that it will be meaningful in future usage.

To teach a sign, it is always preferable to use the actual *object* rather than a picture or explanation. To teach “saddle,” for example, the instructor could show the child a saddled horse, point out the saddle, demonstrate the sign for “saddle,” have the child touch and look at it from all different angles to understand its spatial relationship to the horse. Ask the child to copy your sign several times and show him how the sign corresponds to its location on the horse. Then take the saddle off the horse, perhaps allowing the child to carry it to the tack room where he will see more saddles. This will help the child to understand this “brown thing” is the same object, on *or* off the horse; and the same sign is used in either situation. This type of learning process must be duplicated for each new sign, and may need to be repeated frequently until the sign becomes an accepted part of the child’s vocabulary.

The first few pages of signs include the ASL manual alphabet, numbers and common, as well as special, handshapes you will need to know in order to perform the signs correctly. The signs included in the following chapter are presented in sections according to subject, (e.g., colors, people, adverbs, etc.) The signs within each section are generally arranged in alphabetical order or logical order (ie, good and bad, mother and father, up and down) for convenience. Occasionally it was not possible to create an acceptable sign for a particular word, necessitating fingerspelling.

Some important points to remember:

- When a sign is stationary (little or no movement involved), it is represented by a single photograph.
- Signs involving movement are represented either by a sequenced series of photographs or by arrows. A written explanation is included below each word to clarify the movement.
- Although the right hand is usually the active hand, left-handed persons may reverse the hands, as long as the signing pattern remains consistent.
- Use facial expression to help convey your message – remember, it must serve as a substitute for your voice! Keep your facial and body expression consistent with your meaning. No matter how enthusiastic your voice may sound to *you*, the praise will be wasted unless it is accompanied by a big smile and an enthusiastic visual demonstration for your deaf student.
- Practice, practice, practice!!! There is no substitute for this time-honored method of improving one's signing skills...

American Sign Language Alphabet and Numbers



a b c d e f g

palm forward
thumb bent out

thumb also often
lower (like a claw)

palm in

*palm is always forward
except where noted*



h i j k l m

palm in



n o p q r s

palm faces opposite
side of body

index finger
points out

like p but points
down and unseen
fingers curled in



t u v w x y z

palm forward
thumb can be over fingers
whole palm can be
slanted to side away from body



0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

American Sign Language Basic Handshapes



A



Open A



B



Open B



Bent B



C



D



E



F



Open F



G



H



I



K



L



M



N

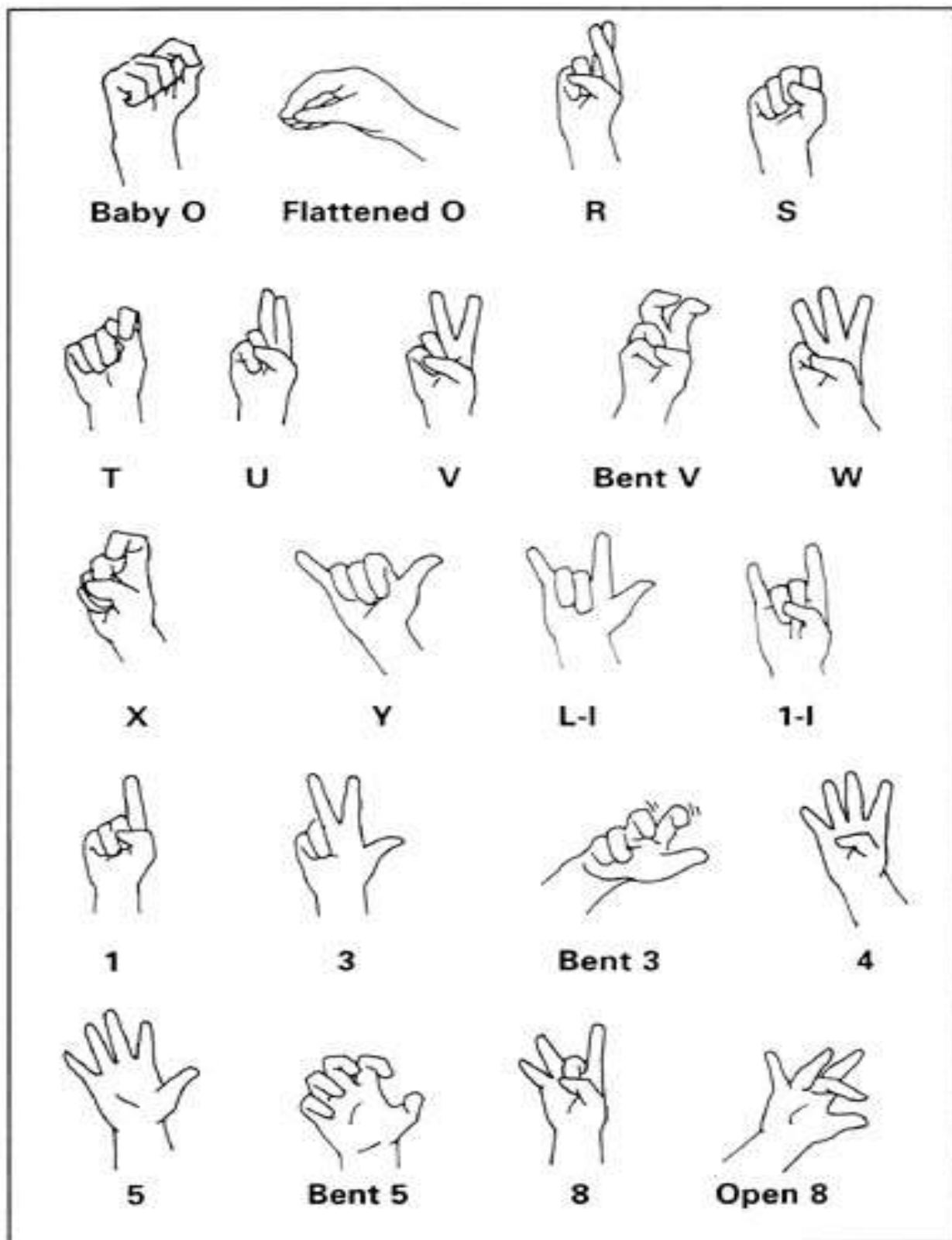


Open N



O

American Sign Language Basic Handshapes



Resource:

[The American Sign Language Handshape Starter: A Beginner's Guide](#)

Richard A. Tennant and Marianne Gluszak Brown
Illustrations by Valerie Nelson-Metlay

American Sign Language Special Handshapes



Bent-2-Handshape:

Using 2-handshape, bend the fingers.



Bent-3-Handshape

Using 3-handshape, bend the fingers.



Bent-L-Handshape:

Using L-handshape, bend the index finger.



Flat-A-Handshape:

Using A-handshape, press the thumb toward the index finger.



Flat-B-Handshape:

With the fingers pressed together, move the thumb away from the index finger.



Flat-O-Handshape:

With the fingers pressed together, move the thumb toward the fingers.

Resource:

Bahan, B. & Paul, F.A. (1985). *The American Sign Language Handshape Game Cards*. San Diego, CA: Dawn Sign Press.

American Sign Language

Common Signs

Resources:

1. <http://library.thinkquest.org>, SIGNhear Communication Center
2. <http://lifeprint.com>



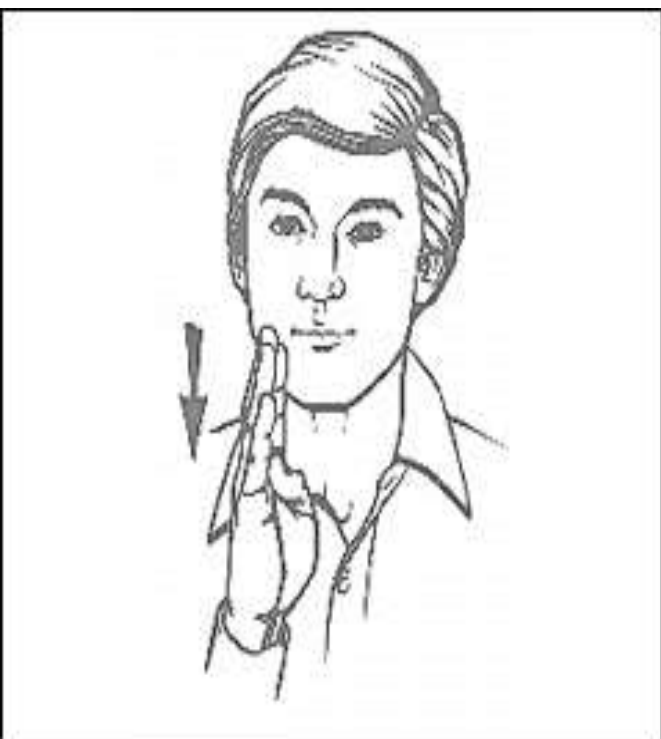
Black

Move the right index finger sideways across the right eyebrow



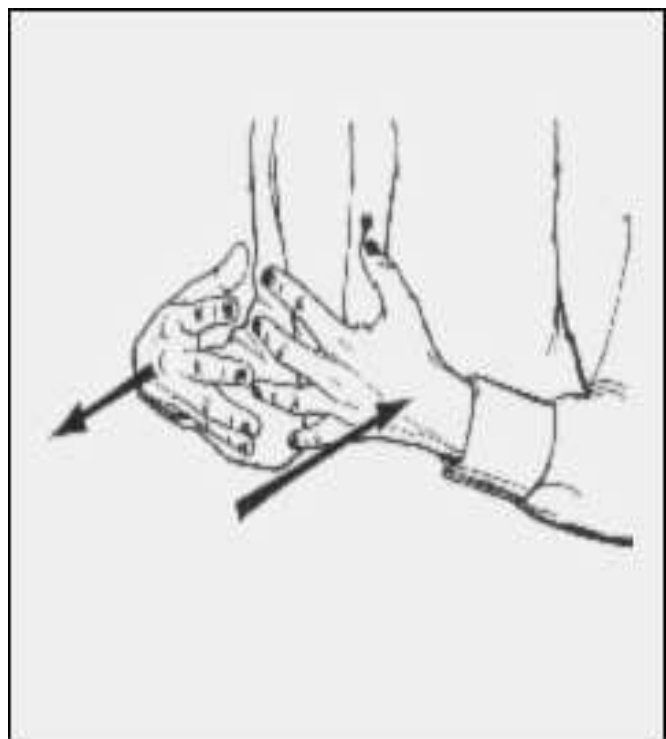
Blue

Move the right B hand to the right while shaking it from the



Brown

Move the index finger of the right B hand down the right cheek



Gray

Pass the fingers of both open hands back and forth through the open spaces between the fingers



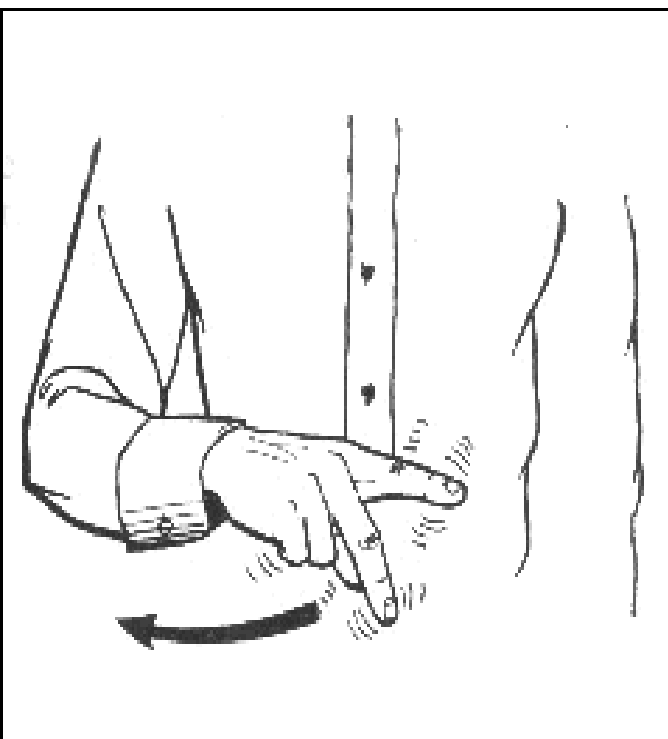
Green

Move the G hand to the right while shaking it from the wrist



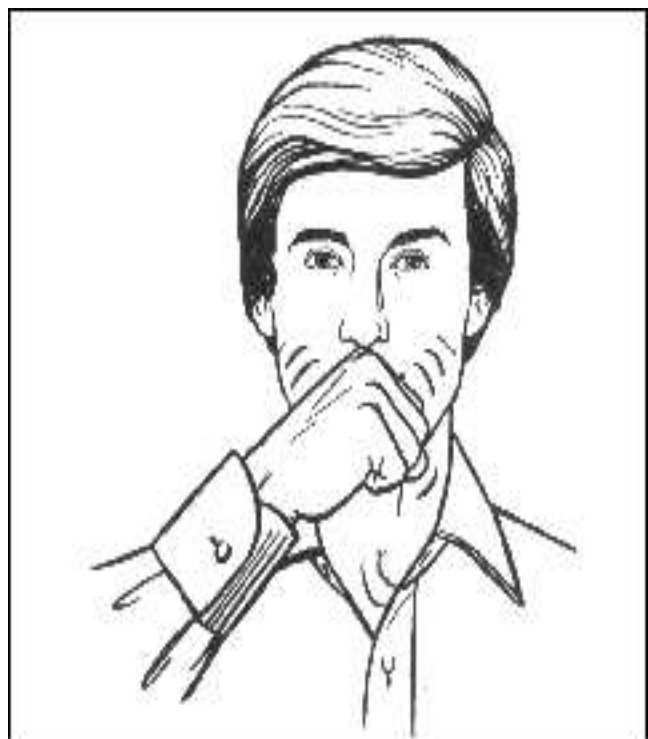
Pink

Stroke the lips downward with the middle finger of the right P hand



Purple

Hold the right P hand to the front and shake it at the wrist as the hand moves to the right



Orange

Slightly open and squeeze the right S hand in front of the mouth a few times



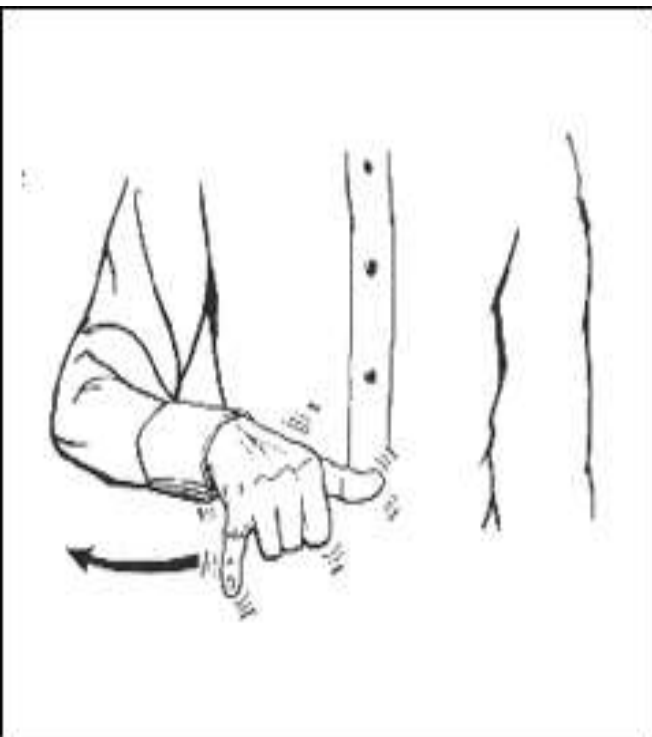
Red

Stroke the lips downward with the right index finger (or R fingers)



White

Place the fingers of the right curved hand on the chest; move it forward simultaneously forming the 'and' hand



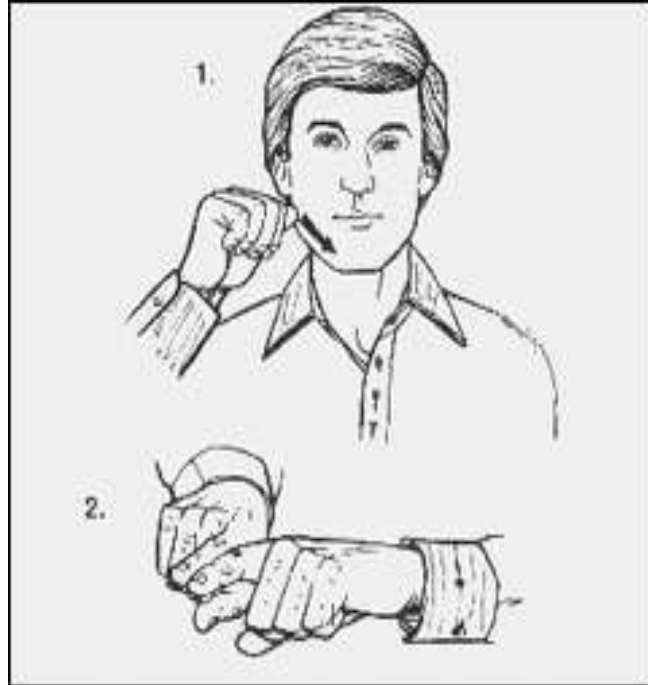
Yellow

Move the right Y hand to the right while shaking it from the wrist



Brother

Move the right hand to the forehead as though gripping the peak of a hat between the fingers and thumb; then move it forward a few inches. Next, point both index fingers forward and bring them together



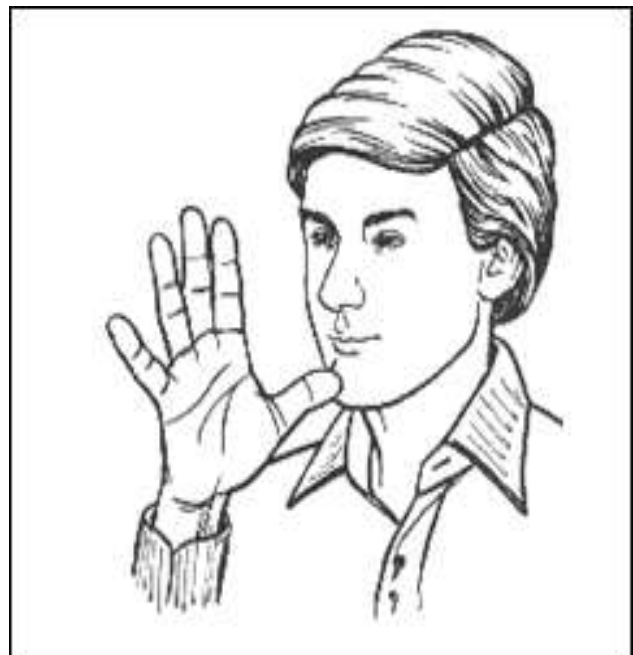
Sister

Trace the right jawbone from ear to chin with the palm side of the right A thumb. Then point both index fingers forward and bring them together



Father:

Considered informal but commonly used is the sign made by touching the forehead with the thumb of the right open hand. The fingers may be wiggled slightly



Mother

Considered informal but commonly used is the sign made by touching the right chin or cheek with the thumb of the right open hand. The fingers may be wiggled slightly



Grandfather

Touch the forehead with the thumb of the right open hand, which has its palm facing left. Move the right hand in two forward arcs



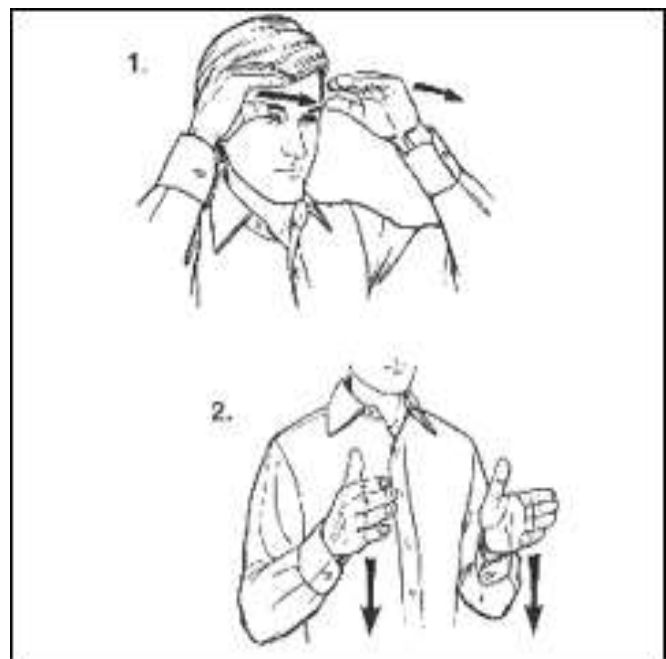
Grandmother

Touch the chin with the thumb of the right open hand, which has its palm facing left. Move the right hand in two forward arcs



Friend

Using index fingers, link them together, unlink and change hand positions, then link together again.



Teacher

Position both open 'and' hands at the front and sides of the head; then move them forward while simultaneously forming closed 'and' hands. Add the sign for person (personalizing word ending)



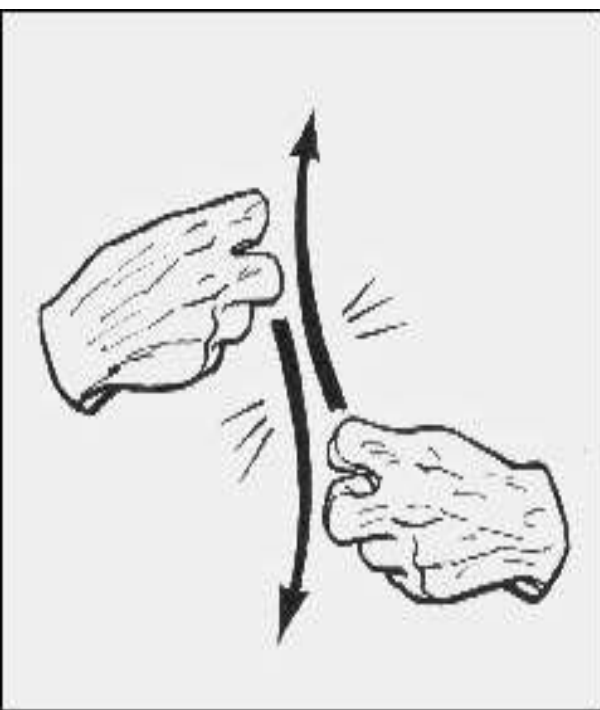
Good

Place the fingers of the right flat hand at the lips; then move the hand down into the palm of the left hand with both palms facing up



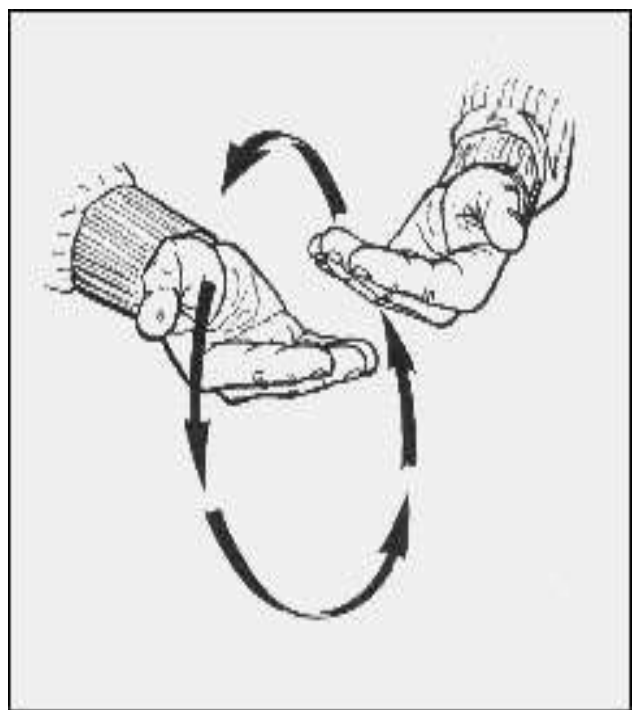
Bad

Place the fingertips of the right flat hand at the lips; then move the right hand down and turn it so that the palm faces down



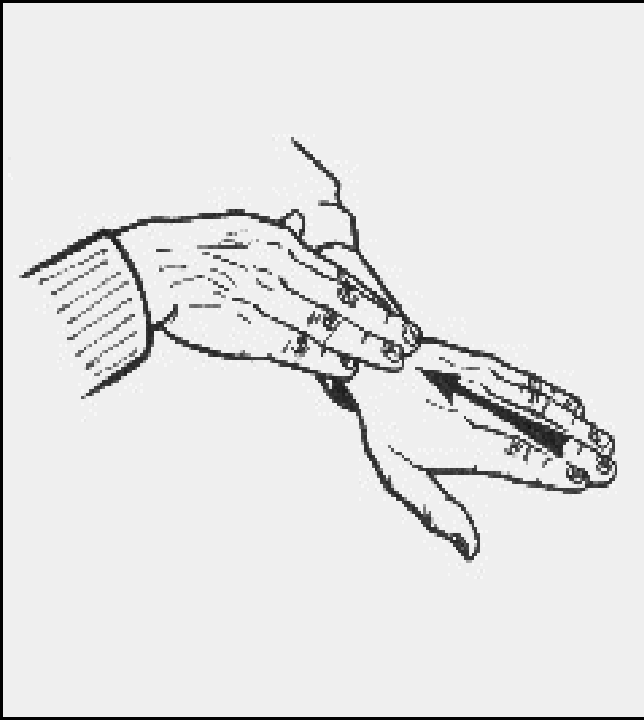
Hard

Strike the back of the left closed hand with the middle finger of the right curved V hand



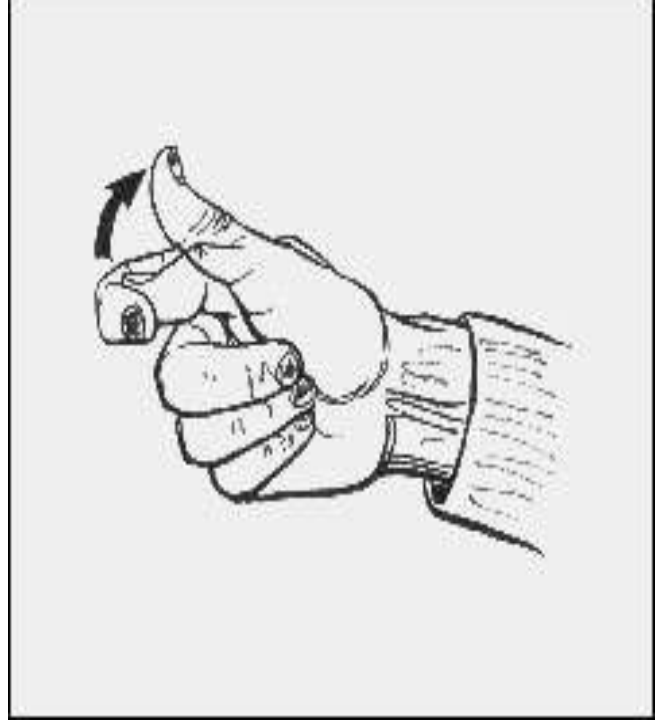
Easy

Hold the left curved hand to the front with the palm up. Brush the little-finger edge of the right curved hand upward over the fingertips of the left hand several times



Slow

Draw the right hand slowly upwards over the back of the left hand. Begin near the fingertips and move up to the wrist



Fast

Flick the right thumb from the crooked index finger



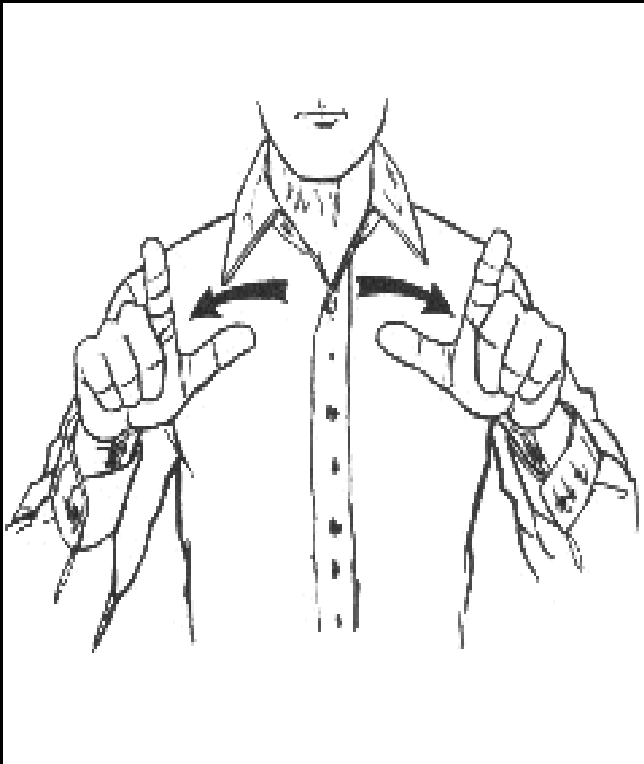
Sad

With palms facing in, bend the head forward slightly while dropping the open hands down the length of the face. Assume a sad expression



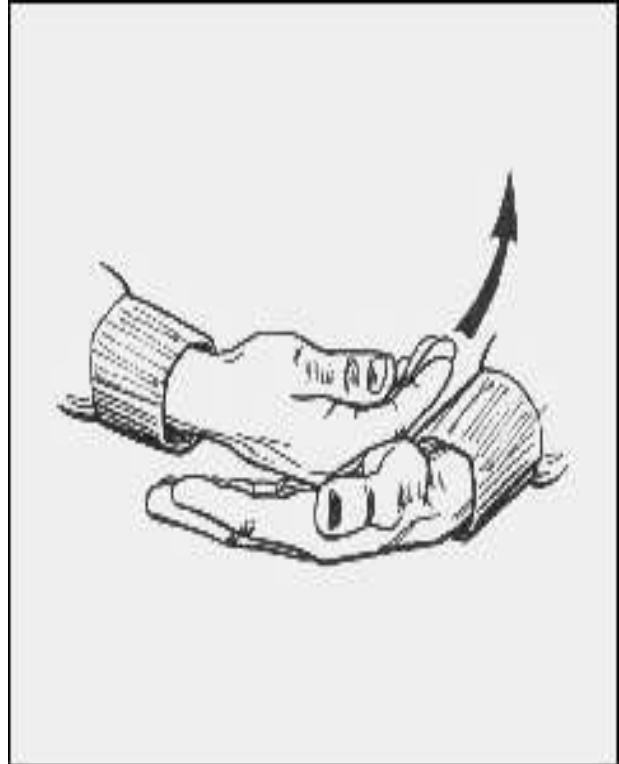
Happy

Move both flat hands in forward circular movements with palms touching the chest simultaneously. One hand is often used by itself



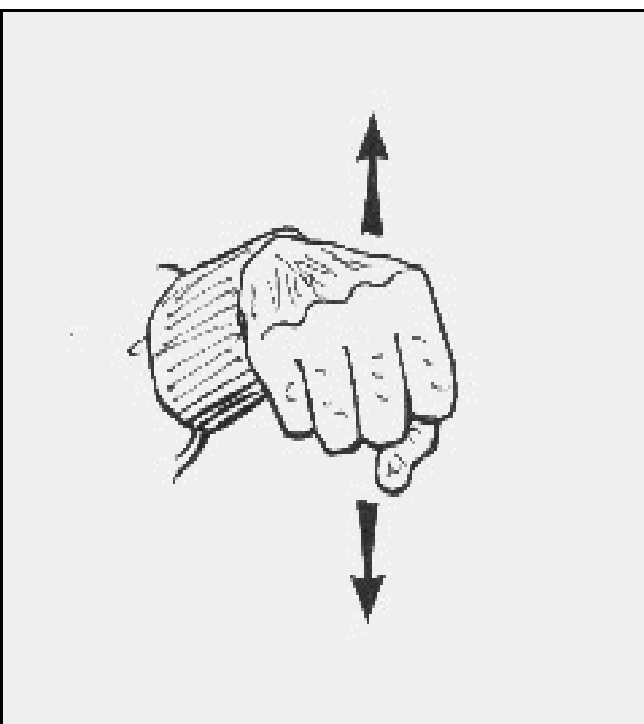
Big

Hold both L hands to the front with palms facing. Move them outward to the sides beyond the width of the body



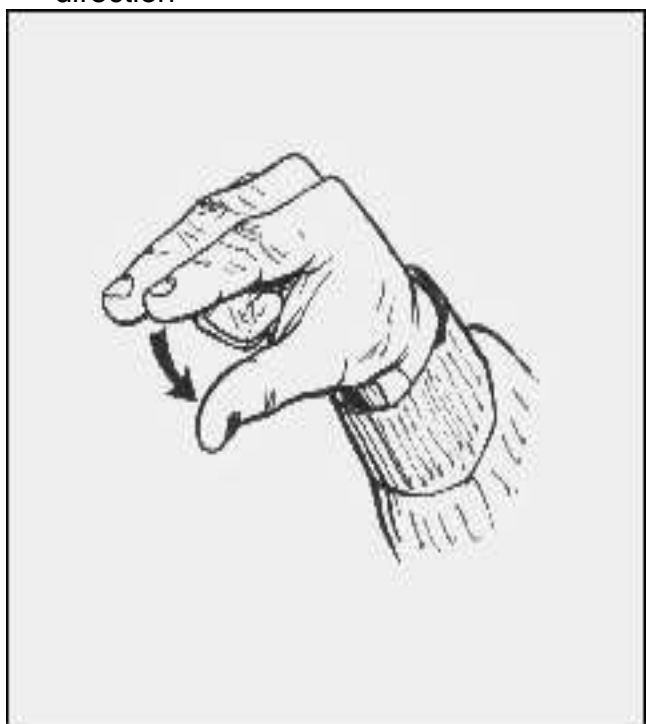
New

Pass the back of the slightly curved right hand across the left flat palm from fingers to heel. Continue the movement of the right hand in a slightly upward direction



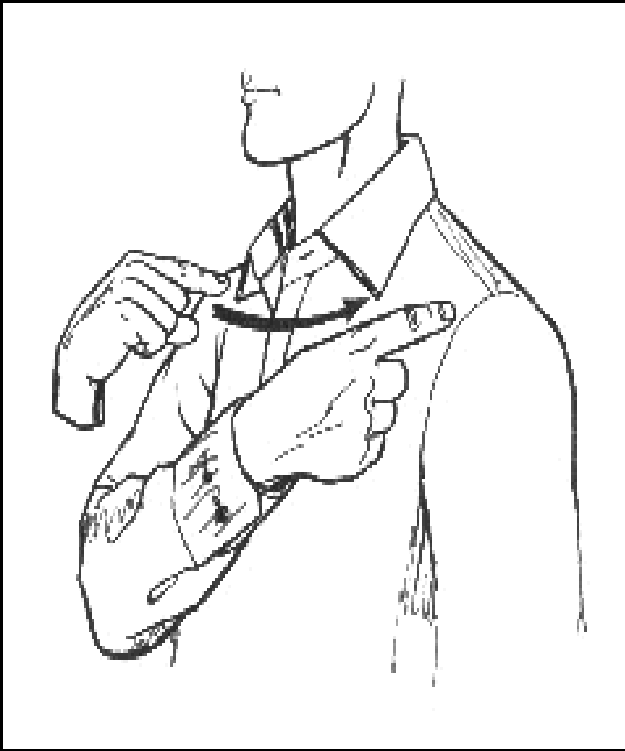
Yes

Nod the right S hand up and down with palm facing forward



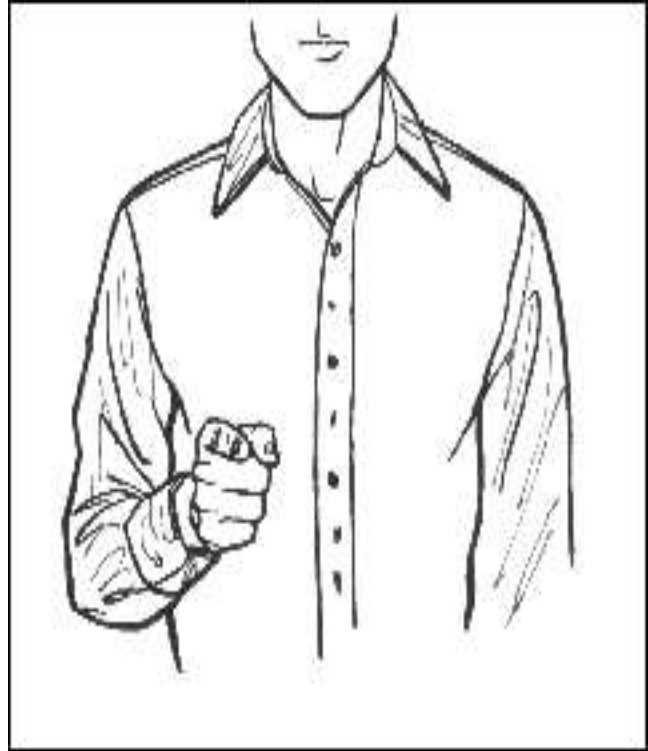
No

Bring the right thumb, index, and middle fingers together



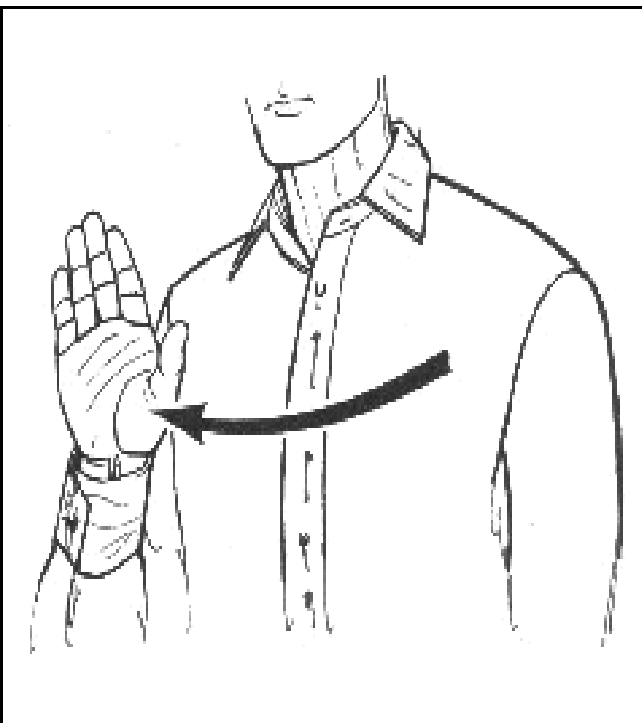
We

Touch the right index finger on the right shoulder; then move it in a forward semi-circle until it touches the left shoulder



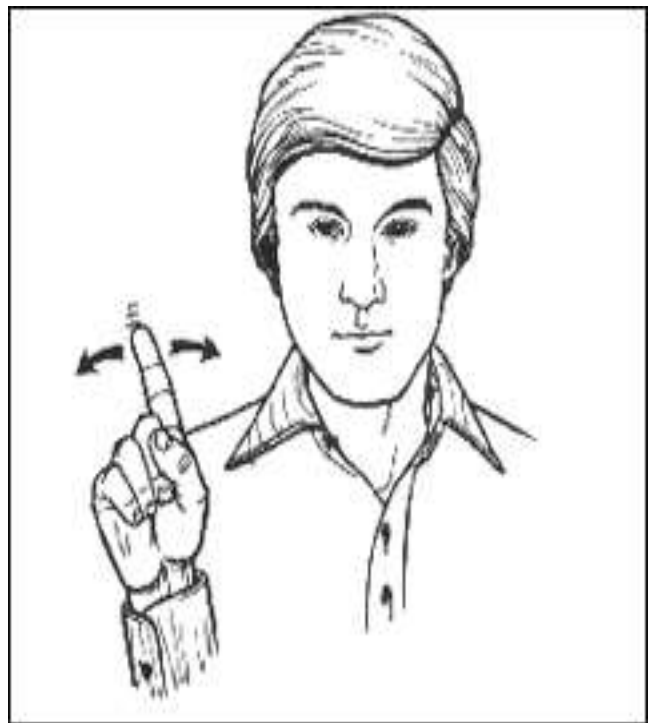
You

Point the right index finger to the person being addressed. If referring to several people make a sweeping motion from left to right



Your

Move the flat hand across the front of the body from left to right with the palm facing outward



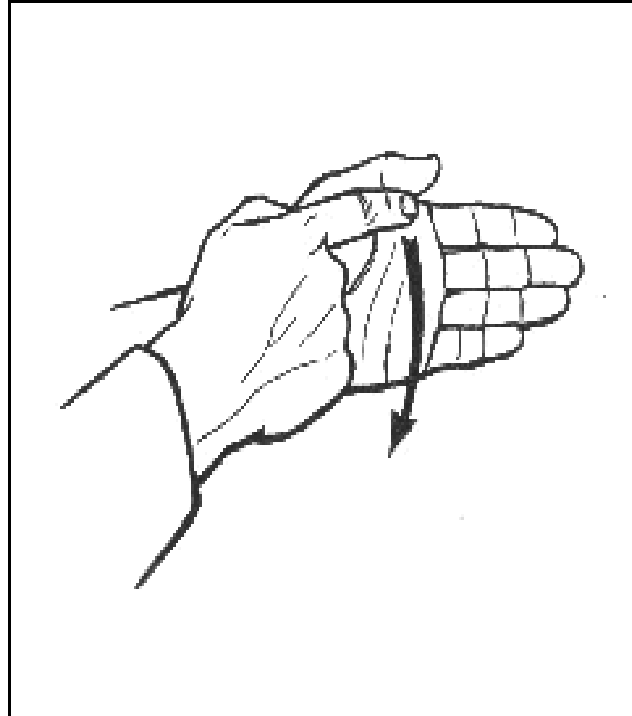
Where

Hold the right index finger up with palm facing forward and shake it rapidly back and forth from left to right



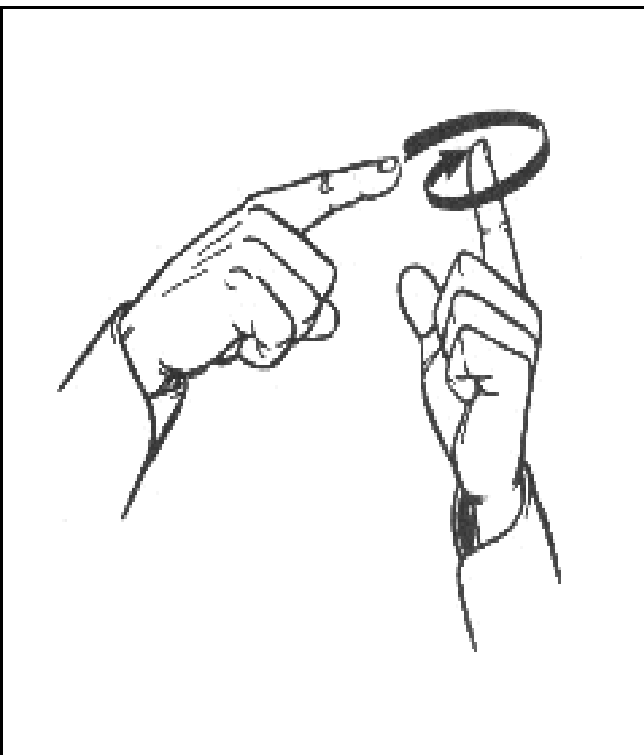
Who

Make a circle in front of the lips with the right index finger



What

Pass the tip of the right index finger down over the left flat hand from index to little finger



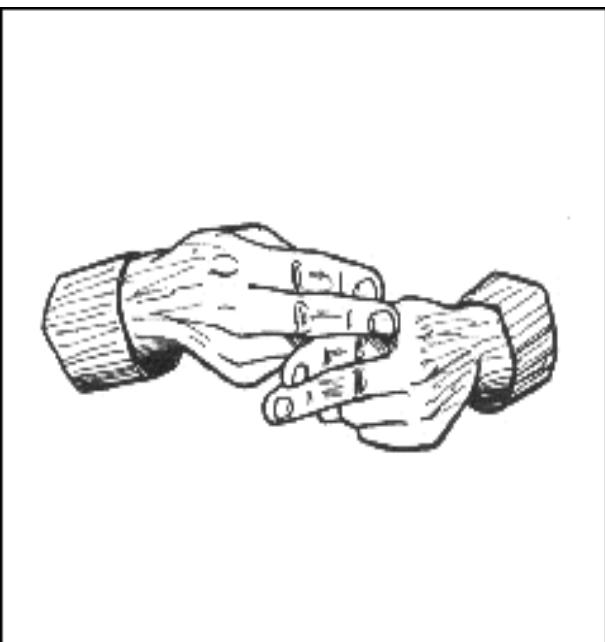
When:

Hold the left index finger upright with the palm facing right. Make a clockwise circle around the left index finger with the right index finger



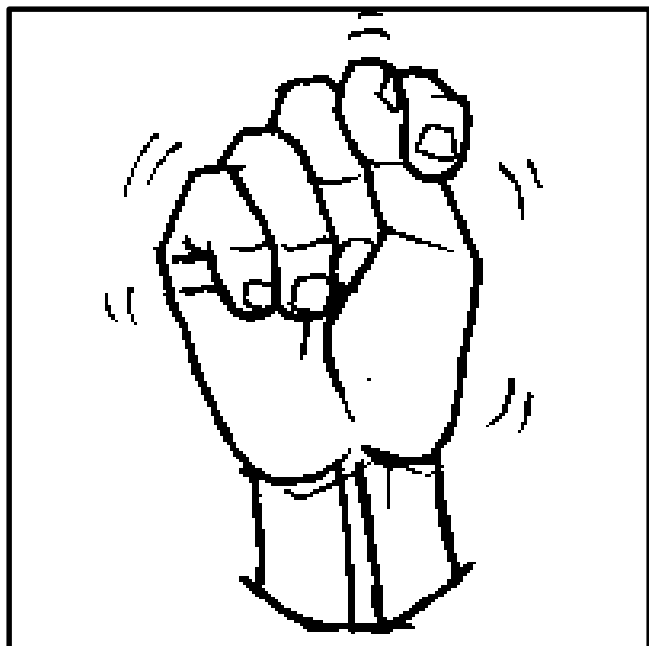
Why

Touch the forehead with the fingers of the right hand; then move forward while simultaneously forming the Y hand with the palm facing in



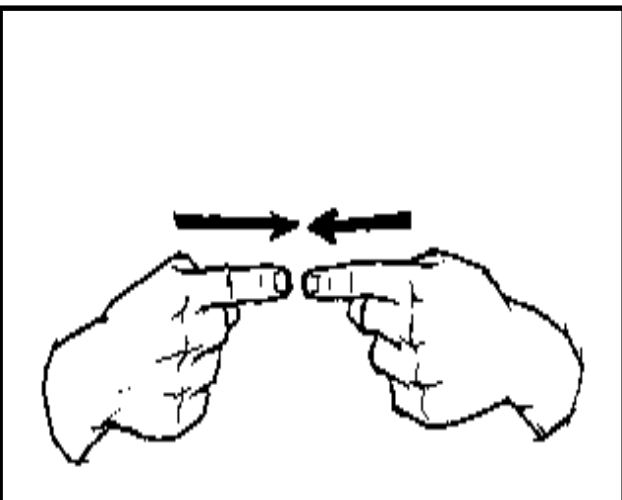
Name

Cross the middle finger edge of the right H fingers over the index finger edge of the left H fingers. To sign 'called' or 'named', move the crossed H hands in a small forward arc together



Bathroom

Form the right hand into the letter "t." The palm side is facing away from you. Shake your hand side to side a couple times.



Hurt

Extend the index fingers of both hands. Bring the fingers toward each other twice using a jabbing movement. A variation of this sign is to do a **twisting movement** as you bring the tips of the index fingers toward each other. The right hand twists one way and the left hand twists the other.

The sign can be done near the part of the body that is feeling pain.



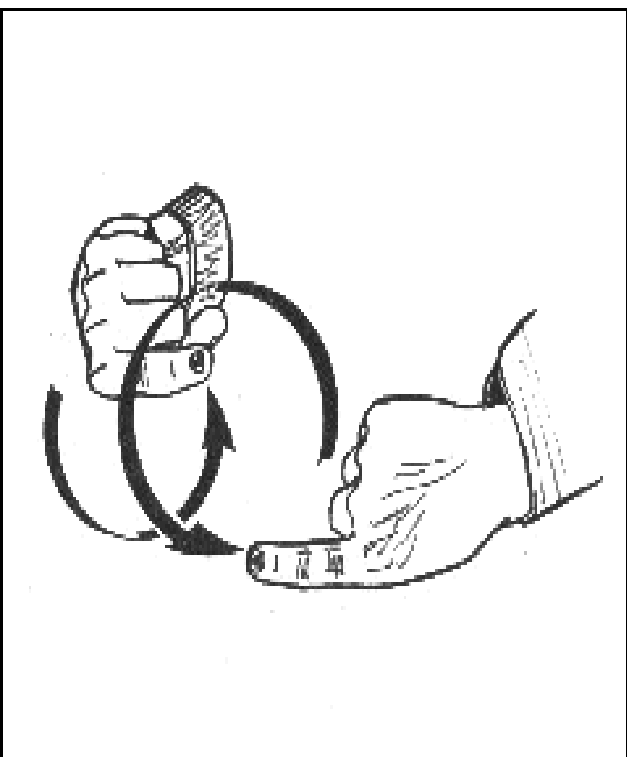
Drink

Move the right C hand in a short arc towards the mouth



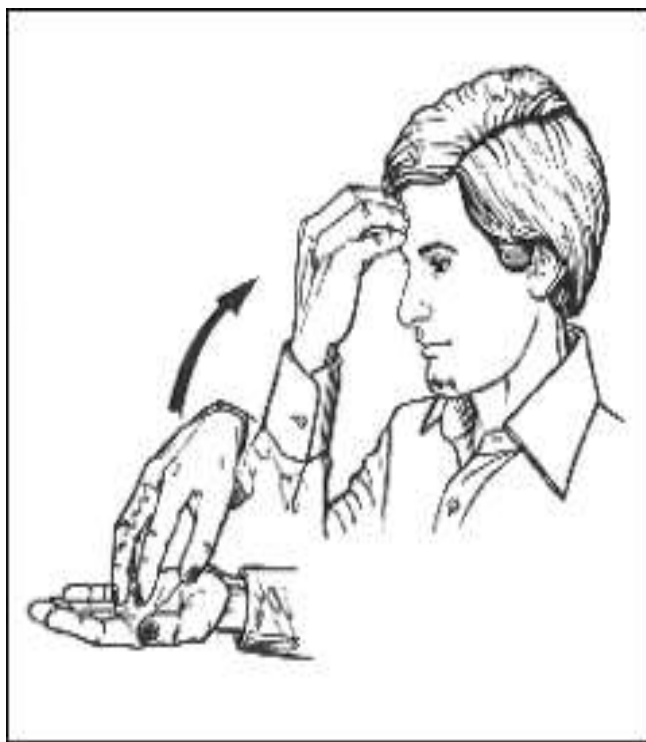
Eat

The right 'and' hand moves towards the mouth a few times



Come

Point both index fingers toward each other and rotate them around each other while simultaneously moving them toward the body



Learn:

Place the fingers of the right open hand on the upturned left palm. Close the right fingers as the hand is moved to the forehead. The fingertips are then placed on the forehead



Listen

Place the cupped right hand behind the right ear and turn the head a little to the left



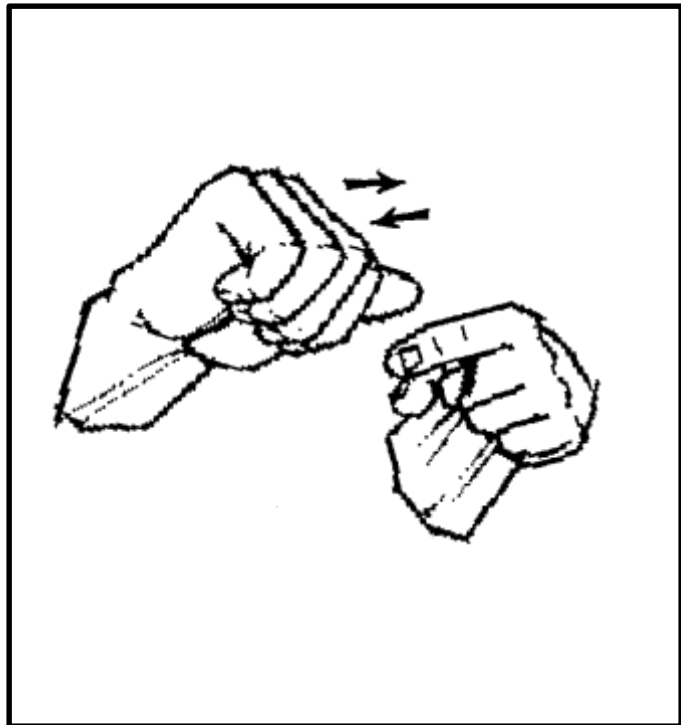
Look

Point the fingers of the right V hand at the eyes and then bring forward and down in the particular direction desired



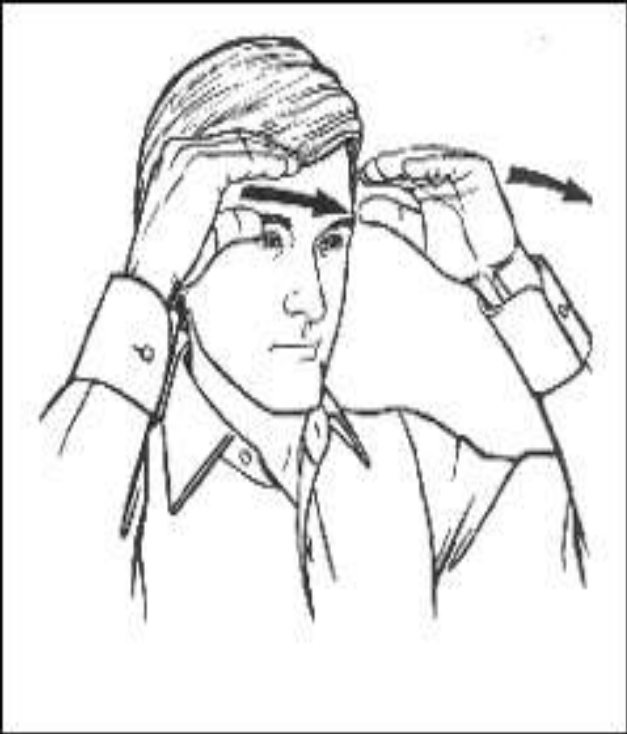
Play

Hold both Y hands in front of the chest and pivot them from the wrists a few times



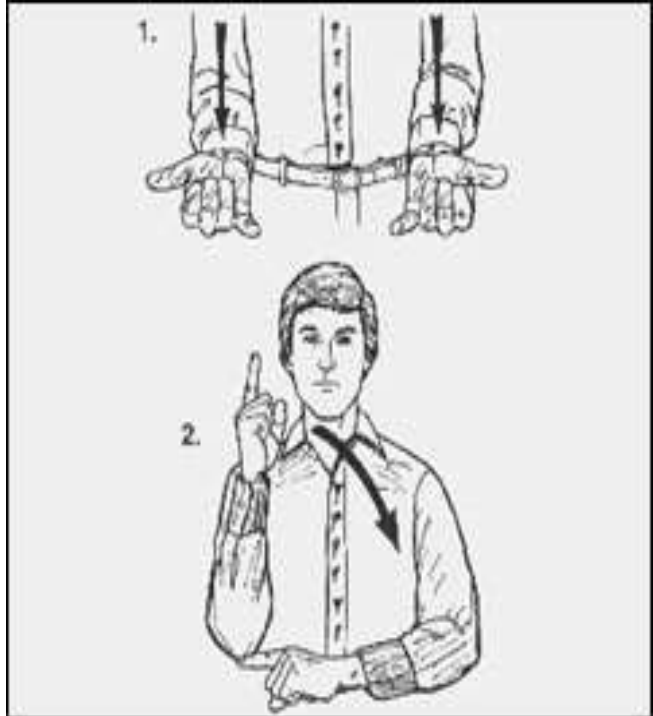
Practice

Use right "A" handshape and brush up against the top side of the left index finger. The motion is similar to polishing a shoe. Think of "polishing up your skills."



Teach:

Position both open 'and' hands at the front and sides of the head, then move them forward while simultaneously forming closed 'and' hands



Today

Drop both Y (or flat) hands together in front of the chest. Point left index finger to the right with palm down. Rest right elbow on left index finger and point right index upward. Move right arm in a partial arc across the body from right to left



Tomorrow

Touch the right A thumb on the right cheek or chin area; then make a forward arc



Yesterday

With the palm facing forward, place the thumb of the right a (or Y) hand on the right side of the chin. Move in a backward arc toward the ear



Cold

Hold up both S hands in front of the chest and shake them



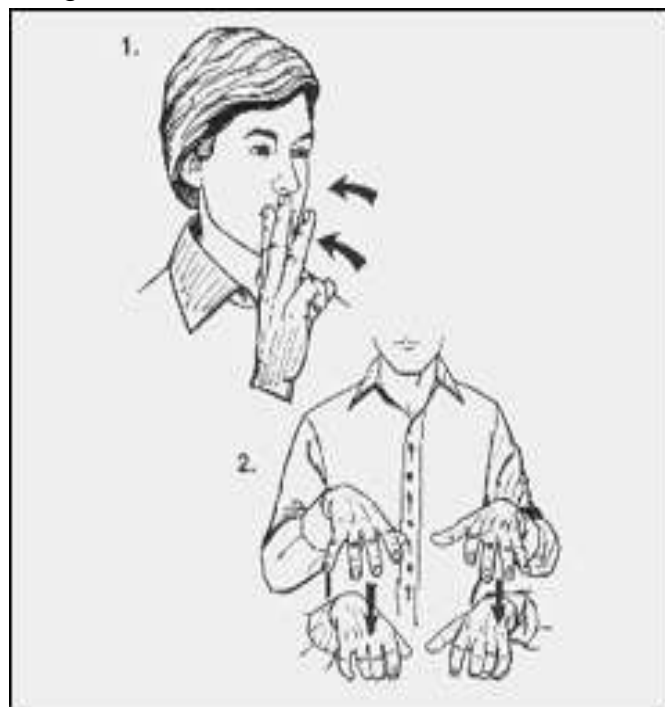
Hot

Place the fingers and the thumb of the right C hand at the sides of the mouth, then quickly pivot the hand forward to the right



Sun / Moon

Use a full "C" handshape at the temple then move away from your head, repeat. The sign for moon uses the thumb and index finger. Instead of the full "C" handshape.



Rain

Touch the mouth with the index finger of the right W hand a few times (the sign for water). Move both hands down in short stages with wiggling fingers. Note: the first part of this sign - the sign for water - is not



Animal

The fingertips touch the chest. The fingers stay straight. The hands pivot inward toward each other twice. Think of the breathing of an animal.



Horse / Donkey

Form "H" with your right hand. Place your thumb on your right temple, bend and unbend your first two fingers a couple times. If you use all the fingers this sign means "donkey."



Monkey

Act like one. Scratch your sides twice.



Bear

Cross your arms over your chest and claw twice



Cat

Place the index fingers and thumbs of the F hands under the nose with the palms facing, then move them out sideways.



Ball

It is often just finger spelled.



Basketball

Using 3 handshape with both hands move up and down twice.



Apple

With hand in "x" handshape, place the knuckle of your right hand against your cheek. At the same time, pivot the hand back and forth.



Grass / Hay

Hold a loose "5" hand palm up, under your chin with the fingers pointing outward in front of you. Using a circular movement, bring the hand up, forward, down and back, up, and forward. The palm of the hand brushes up against the chin twice.



Belt

Using 2 handshape with both hands move them together twice around your waist.



Shoes

Closing both hands, thumbs facing. Gently strike your hands together twice.



Coat

Form both hands into the letter "a." Place both hands at the base of your neck. Now move both hands downward to your lower chest:



Boots

With both hands in B handshape facing down. Gently strike your hands together twice.



Hat

Pat your head twice



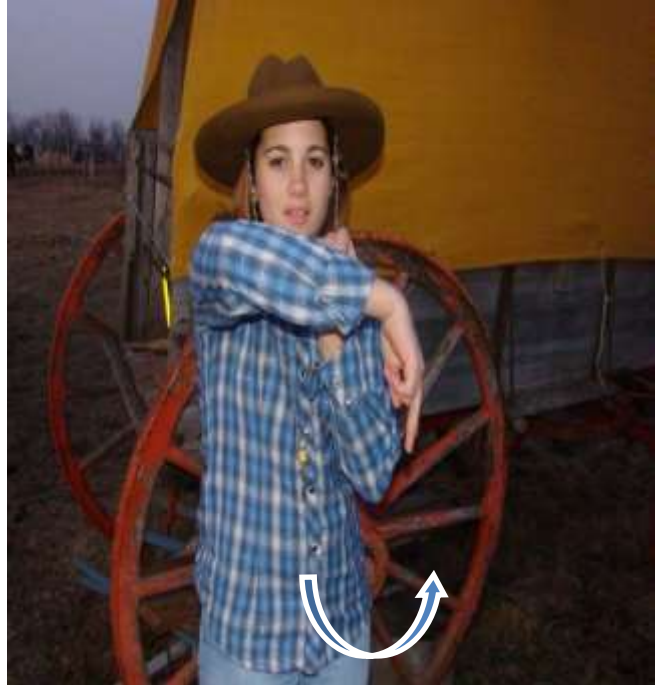
Home

Bring your fingers and thumb together and touch your cheek at the side of your mouth. Then move your hand an inch or two toward your ear and touch your cheek again.



ACROSS

Starting from the front of the non-dominant hand, the dominant hand, using bent-2-handshape, moves across from the front to the back of the non-dominant hand.



AROUND

Starting at one side of the non-dominant hand, the dominant hand, using the 2-handshape, moves from one side to the other side of the non-dominant hand.



AWAY

In a repeated , gentle motion, two hands move in a “shoo-away” fashion.



BEHIND

The dominant hand, using A-handshape, moves from the front of the non-dominant hand to the back of the non-dominant hand.



BETWEEN

In a repeated motion, the dominant hand moves “between” two fingers of the non-dominant hand.



CLOSE

The dominant hand moves towards the non-dominant hand.



IN / INSIDE

The dominant hand in flat-O-handshape makes a small repeated motion in the non-dominant hand in C-handshape.



OUT / OUTSIDE

The dominant hand in flat-O-handshape makes a small repeated motion out of the non-dominant hand in C-handshape.



UNDER

The dominant hand using flat-B-handshape moves under the non-dominant hand.



OVER

Start from the front of the non-dominant hand, the dominant hand, using flat-B-handshape, moves across from the front to the back of the non-dominant hand.



NEXT TO

In flat-B-handshape, the hand moves away from the signer's body.



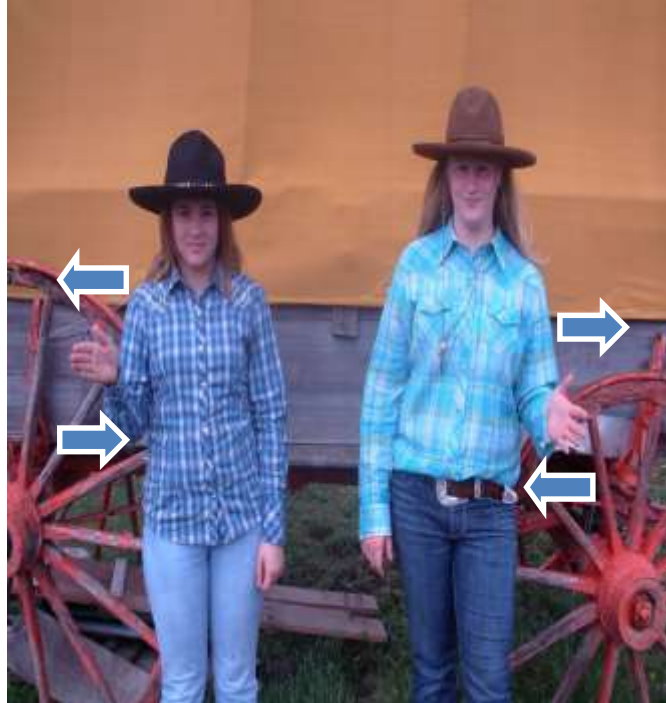
MIDDLE / DOWN THE CENTER

The dominant hand makes a small circular motion onto the non-dominant hand.



THROUGH

In a motion, the dominant hand moves “through” two fingers of the non-dominant hand.



TO THE SIDE

The dominant hand motions to the left or to the right depending on the direction of the side.



RIGHT & LEFT

The right hand makes a “R” handshape and moves to the right.
The left hand makes a “L” handshape and moves to the left.



DOWN

The dominant hand, using 1-handshape, makes a downward movement.



UP

The dominant hand, using 1-handshape, makes an upward movement.



OFF

The dominant hand moves off of the non-dominant hand.



ON

The dominant hand moves onto the non-dominant hand.



WEAVE

- **STEP 1: Both hands in flat-B-handshape, representing two horses, prepare to weave.**
- **STEP 2: Both hands swerve into each other and ends in opposite direction.**
- **STEP 3: Then both hands move forward.**



BACK UP

VARIATION #1 (LEFT): The dominant hand, using 1-handshape, makes repeated movement.

VARIATION #2 (RIGHT): Both hands, using 1-handshape, make repeated backward movements.





BACKWARD

Starting from the front of the chest, both hands, in A-handshape, move backward in a repeated motion.



FORWARD/LEAN FORWARD

Both hands in 1-handshape start near the chest area and move away from the chest as if moving forward.



DIAGONAL

The dominant hand makes a diagonal motion from one point to another.



CIRCLE

In a circular motion, the dominant hand in 1-handshape moves as if the horse is running in circles.



REVERSE (CHANGE DIRECTION)

VARIATION #1: Two hands in bent-2-handshape make a small repeated reverse motion with two fingers on each hand moving as if the horse legs are walking backwards.

VARIATION #2: Start from the front of the chest, both hands in A-handshape make a backward motion.



LINE UP

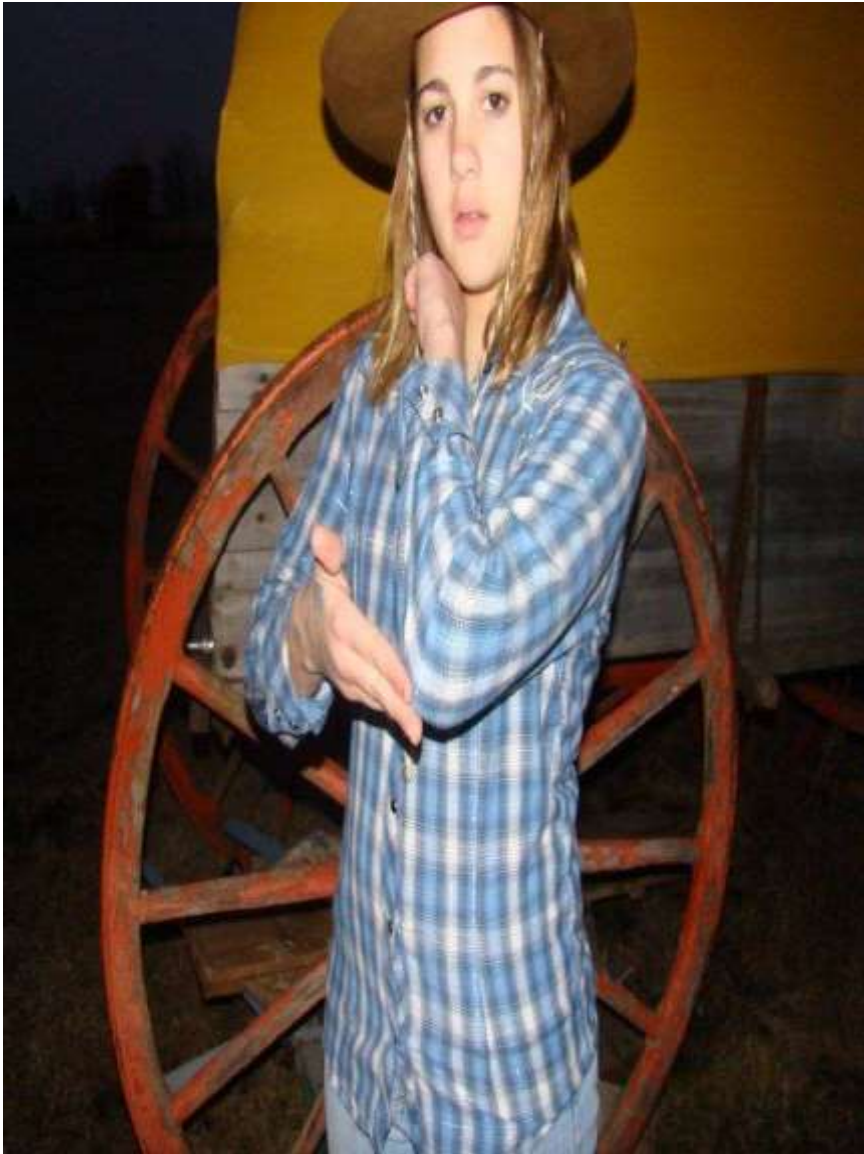
Using both hands in 4-handshape, the dominant hand makes a backward motion.



BAREBACK PAD

For noun, use a fingerspelled sign: B-A-R-E-B-A-C-K P-A-D.

For verb “to put bareback pad on the horse”: the dominant hand moves on the non-dominant hand.



BEND YOUR ELBOWS

With the non-dominant arm bent, the dominant hand touches the elbow of the bent arm.



BEND YOUR KNEES

With the leg bent, the dominant hand touches the knee of the bent leg.



BIT

Using 1-handshape, the hand moves toward an open mouth as if putting the bit in the horse's mouth.



BREATHE

VARIATION #1: Both hands make a repeated motion as if the chest is breathing.

VARIATION #2: Both hands in C-handshape make a repeated motion as if the horse's nose is breathing.

BRIDLE

VARIATION #1: The dominant hand in 1-handshape touches the closed mouth twice.

VARIATION #2: The dominant hand in bent-L-handshape touches the nose twice.



BUCKLE THROATLATCH

BUCKLE: Both hands in H-handshape make a buckling motion on the chin line near the ear.

THROATLATCH: Both hands in bent-L-handshape make two small latching motions on the chin line.





CANTER /LOPE (SLOW GALLOP)

Both hands in bent-2-handshape make a repeated “galloping” motion.

CATCH/THROW

In a circular motion, the dominant hand in flat-A-handshape moves as if “catching or throwing a rope” on an animal or object.



DISMOUNT

In bent-3-handshape, the dominant hand “dismounts” the non-dominant hand.



DON'T BE SCARED

DON'T: Both hands move outward in a repeated opposite direction with the head shaking in negation.

BE-SCARED: Both hands move inward in a repeated same direction.



ENGLISH SADDLE

The dominant hand makes a repeated small movement on the non-dominant hand.

The dominant hand lands on the non-dominant hand as if “putting a saddle on”.



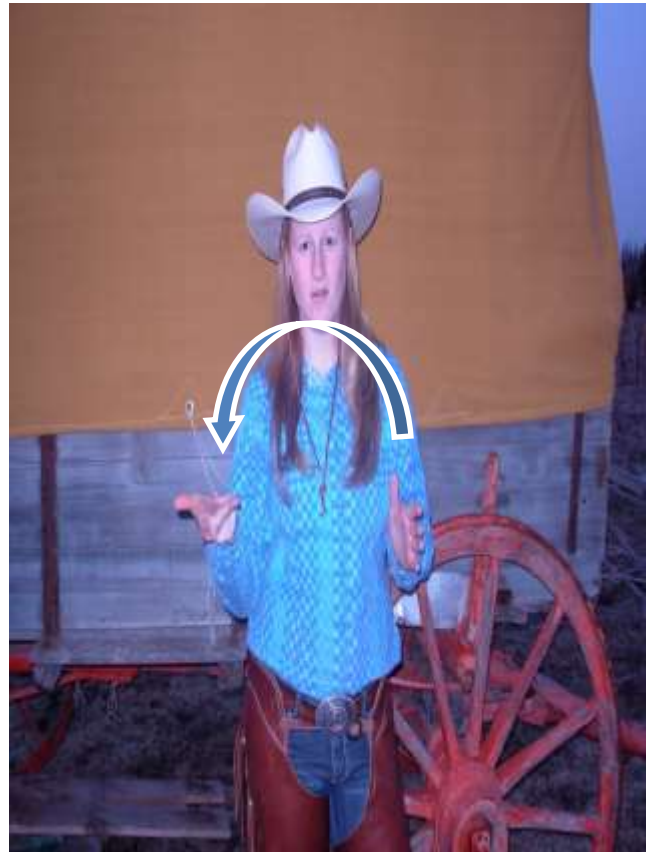


EYES UP (LOOK UP)

With an upward eye gaze, 2-handshape hand moves upward to “look up”.

FALL (OFF/DOWN)

In 3-handshape, the dominant hand “falls off and turns over” the palm of the non-dominant hand.



FAST

Using both hands starting with 1-handshape and ending in S-handshape, the hands move down quickly toward the chest.





FEED

Both hands, using flat-O-handshape, move in a small repeated motion.



FIND

Using open 8-handshape, the hand starts at the bottom and moves up while closing 8-handshape hand as if “picking something up”.



GIVE

Moving away from the signer's body, the hand in flat-O-handshape makes a "giving" motion.



GOOD JOB/NICE TURN

Make a “thumbs up” gesture to say “good job”.



GROOM

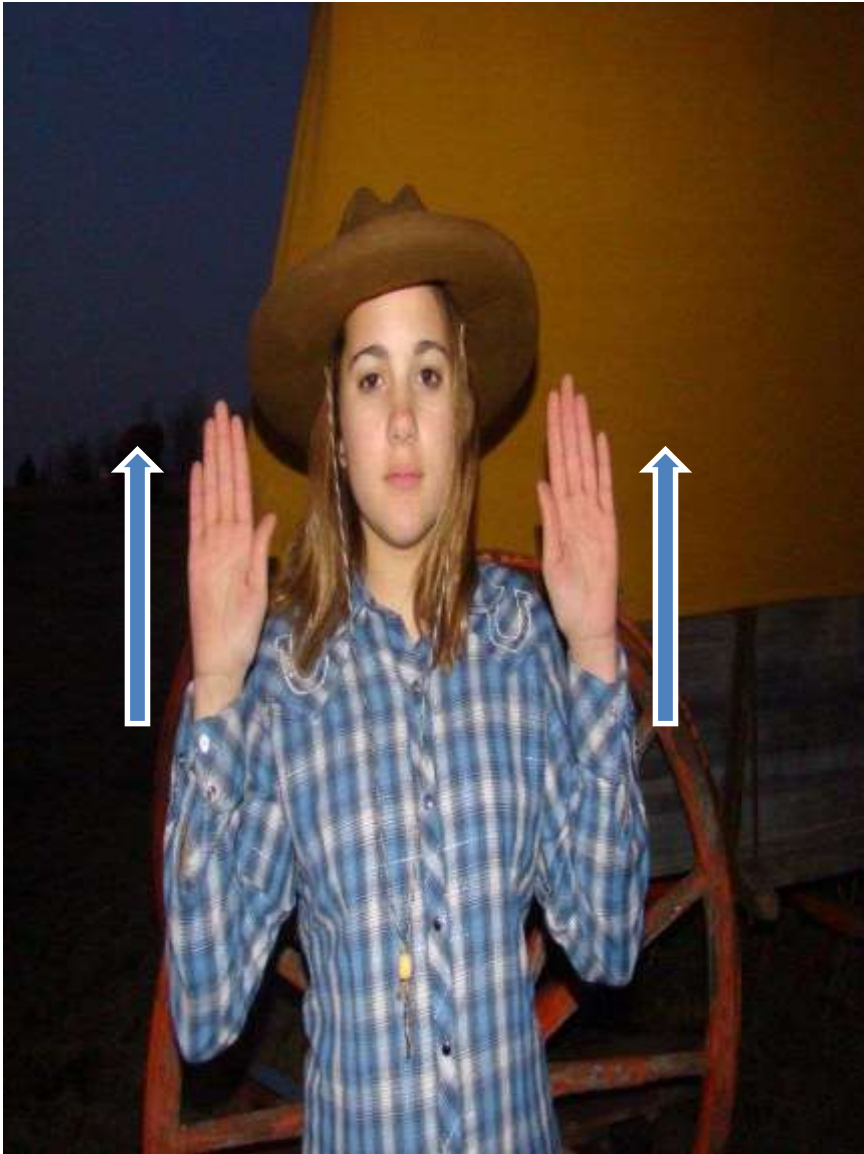
Using S-handshape (without actually having a brush in hand), the dominant hand makes a repeated “brushing” motion as if brushing a horse.

HALTER

VARIATION #1: The dominant hand in bent-L-handshape touches the nose twice.

VARIATION #2: The dominant hand in 1-handshape touches the closed mouth twice.





HANDS UP

**Starting with the palm down,
both hands move upward and
stay up.**



HEADSTALL

Using L-handshape, both hands move as if they are “putting a headstall on a horse’s head”.



HEELS DOWN

Using both hands, hands push down with the palm slightly downward to show “heels down”.



HELP

The dominant hand in A-handshape makes a small repeated motion on the non-dominant hand.



HOLD ON

Both hands, in S-handshape, clasp to hold an imaginary lead rope.



HOLD YOUR REINS

In a slight pull motion, both hands use S-handshape to hold an imaginary rein.



HOOF PICK

Hoof: Fingerspell H-O-O-F.

Pick: Using X-handshape, the dominant hand makes a small repeated “picking” motion on the non-dominant hand.



HORN

A fingerspelled sign: H-O-R-N.



HUG

**Two hands in A-handshape
make a small repeated
embrace motion on the chest.**

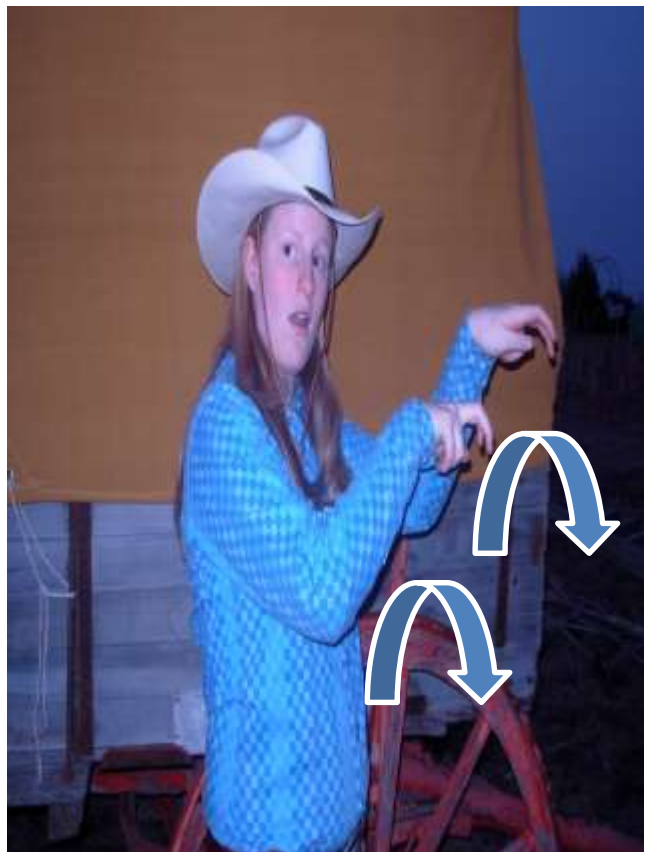


JOG

Two hands in bent-2-handshape make a small repeated jogging motion with two fingers on each hand moving as if the horse legs are jogging.

JUMP

Both hands in bent-2-handshape make a “jumping” motion.



KICK

Starting in X-handshape, the dominant hand moves in a kicking motion ending in 1-handshape.





LEAD ROPE

Noun: Fingerspell L-E-A-D R-O-P-E.

Verb: In S-handshape, the dominant hand clasps to hold an imaginary lead rope.



LET GO

Starting in S-handshape, both hands open as if “letting go a rope” .

LONG/SHORT SIDE OF ARENA

LONG SIDE: The dominant hand stretches and makes a repeated motion in front of the non-dominant hand.

SHORT SIDE: The dominant hand moves closer to the non-dominant hand and makes a repeated motion.

ARENA: A fingerspelled sign.





LOOK FOR

In C-handshape, the hand makes a small repeated circular motion.

MATCH

In S-handshape, both hands move toward each other.



MOUNT

In 3-handshape, the dominant hand “mounts” on the non-dominant hand.



MOVE

In a repeated firm motion, two hands move in a “shoo-away” fashion.





PET

In flat-B-handshape, the dominant hand makes a small repeated motion as if petting a horse.



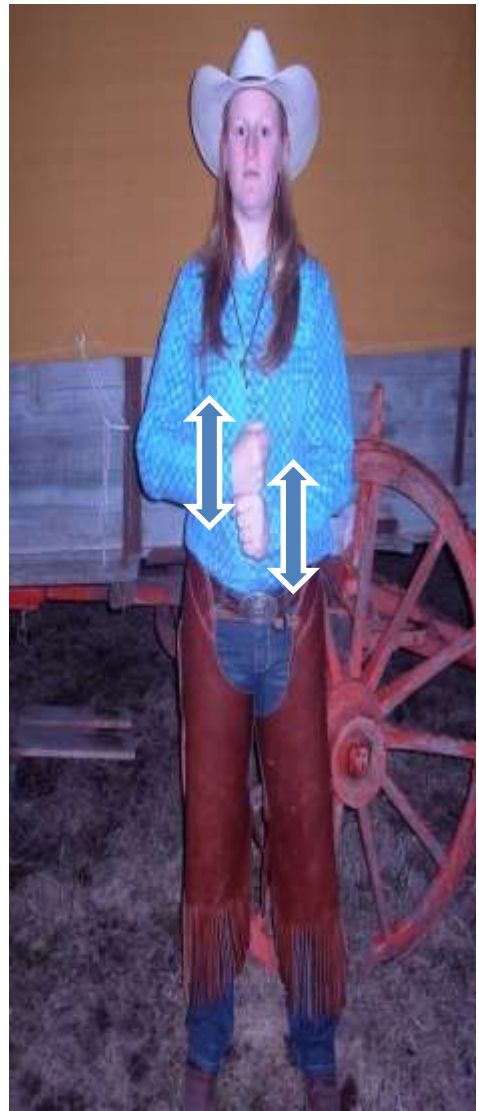
PLEASE

In flat-B-handshape, the hand makes a small repeated circular motion.

POST

In S-handshapes, both hands clasp together making a small repeated upward and downward movement.

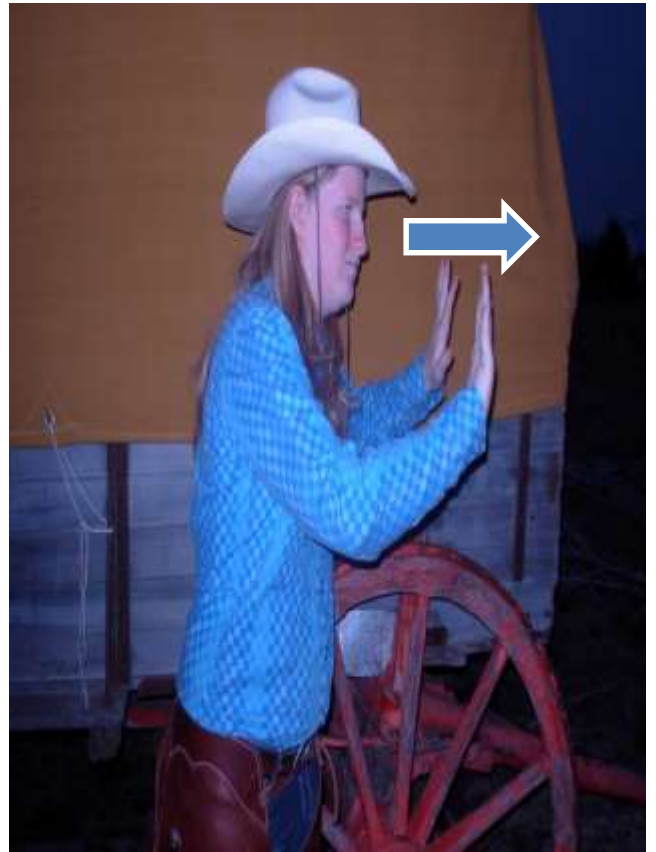
Also a fingerspelled sign: P-O-S-T.



PULL & PUSH

In S-handshape, both hands make a pull-down motion.

In flat-B-handshape, both hands make a push motion.





PUT ON SADDLE/SADDLE BLANKET

**The dominant hand lands on the
non-dominant hand as if “putting
a saddle on”.**



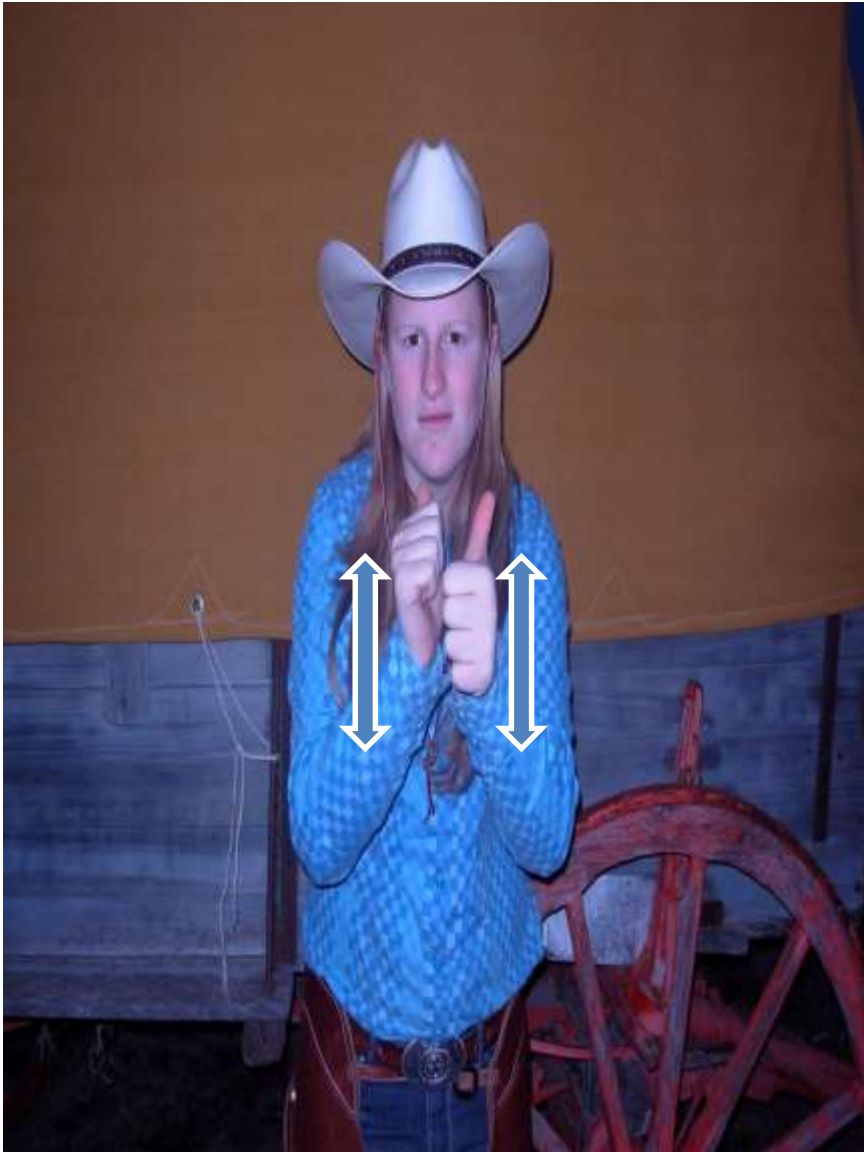
PUT YOUR FOOT (FEET) IN THE STIRRUP(S)

The dominant hand in flat-B-handshape makes an entering motion into the palm of the non-dominant hand.



PUT YOUR HEELS DOWN

Both hands in flat-B-handshape and wrists bend down as if the heels are down.



RACE

Both hands in A-handshape make small repeated motions as if in a competition.



REACH (UP)

The dominant hand starts in open handshape and ends in S-handshape when making a reaching motion.



REACH DOWN

The dominant hand starts in open handshape and ends in S-handshape when making a reaching motion.



REINS

Both hands, in S-handshape, clasp to hold the imaginary reins.

Also a fingerspelled sign: R-E-I-N-S.

REVERSE/REVERSE (CHANGE DIRECTION)

VARIATION #1: Two hands in bent-2-handshape make a small repeated reverse motion with two fingers on each hand moving as if the horse legs are walking backwards.

VARIATION #2: Start from the front of the chest, both hands in A-handshape make a backward motion.



RIDE

VARIATION #1

(RIDING): Both hands in S-handshape clasp as if holding a saddle horn & makes a small repeated circular motion as if riding on a horse.

VARIATION #2 (TO

RIDE): The dominant hand in 3-handshape “gets on” the flat-B non-dominant hand representing a horse & makes a small repeated circular motion as if riding on the horse.



SADDLE

The dominant hand makes two movements on the non-dominant hand as if “there is a saddle on a horse”.





SADDLE BLANKET

Noun: Fingerspell S-A-D-D-L-E B-L-A-N-K-E-T.

Verb: The dominant hand makes a movement on the non-dominant hand as if “draping a blanket on a horse”.



SEAT

A fingerspelled sign: S-E-A-T.

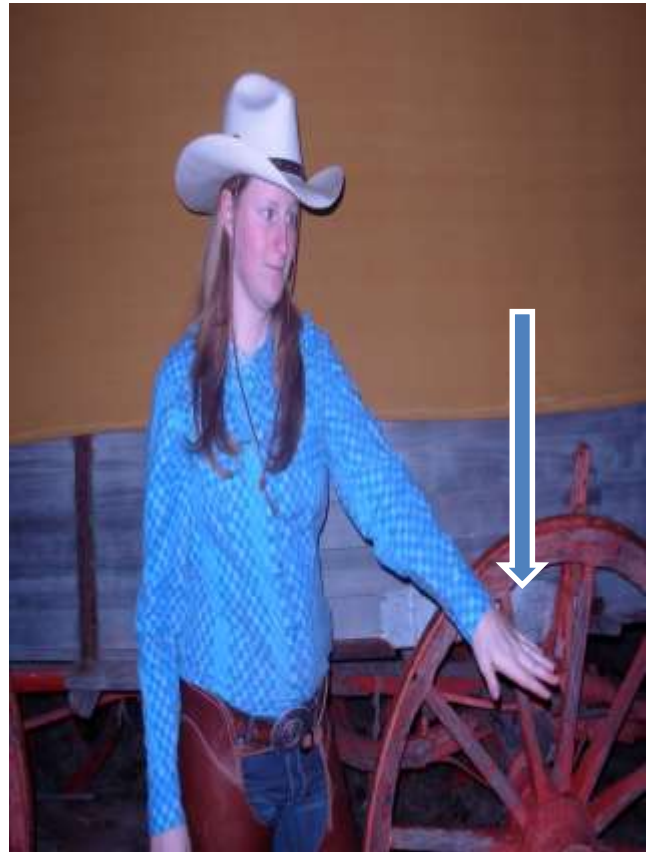


SHORTEN/LENGTHEN YOUR REINS

- 1. SHORTEN YOUR REINS:** With both hands clasped together in S-handshape, pull the hands closer to the chest.
- 2. LENGTHEN YOUR REINS:** With both hands in S-handshape, move the hands away from the chest.

(HORSE) SIT

The dominant hand in flat-B-handshape makes a downward motion.

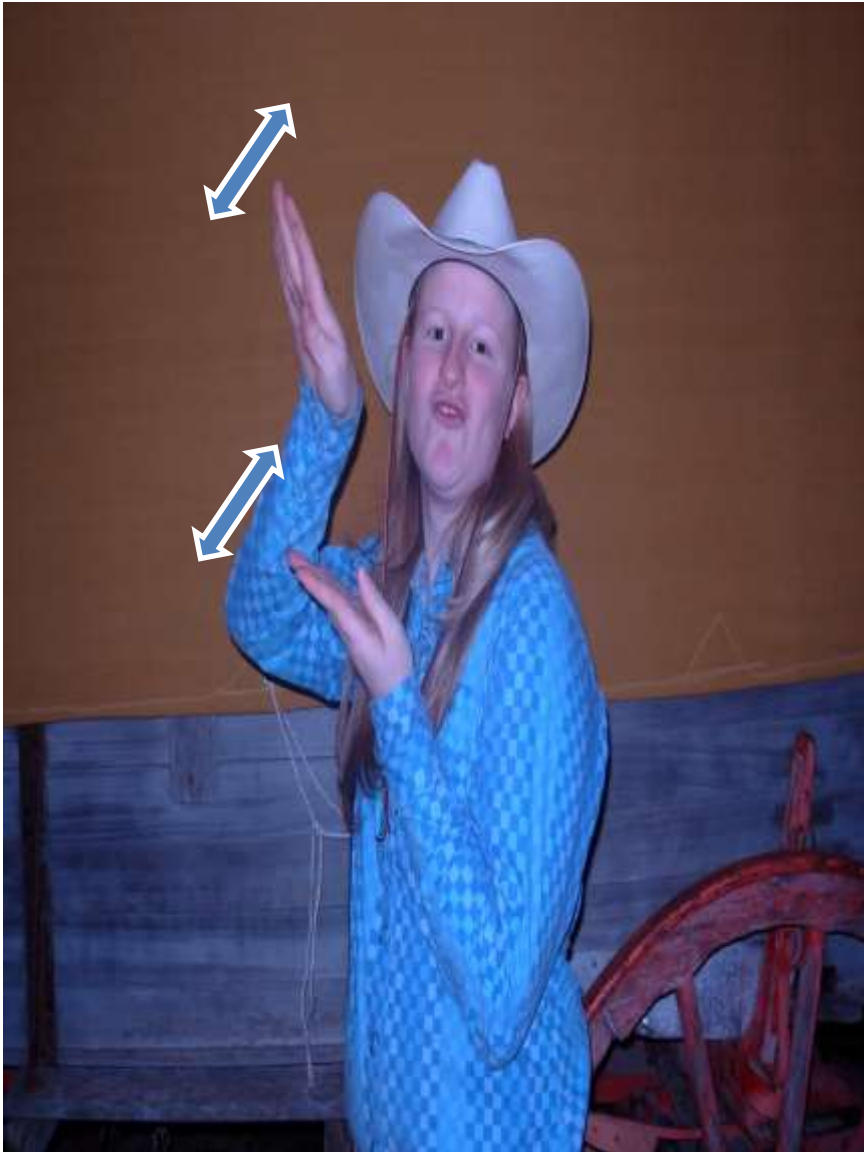


SIT DOWN & SIT UP TALL

In 2-handshape, the dominant hand “sit” on the non-dominant hand.

Both hands in 2-handshape show a “standing motion”.





SMILE

**Both hands in flat-B-handshape
make a small repeated motion as if a
horse is smiling.**

SQUEEZE

Two hands in A-handshape make a small repeated embrace motion on the chest as if “squeezing a horse”.



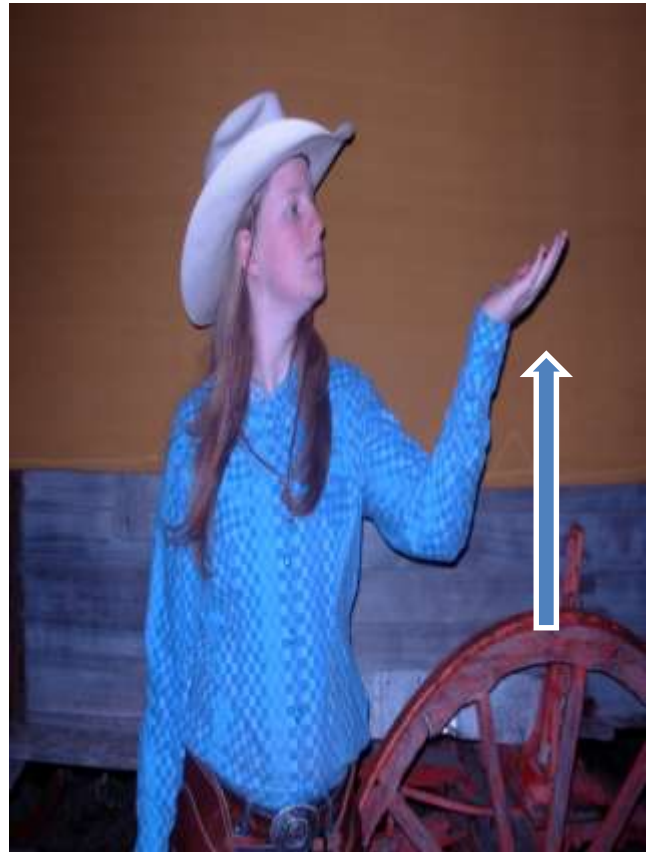


STAND UP

**In 2-handshape, the dominant hand
“gets up” on the non-dominant hand.**

(HORSE) STAND UP

The dominant hand in flat-B-handshape makes an upward motion.





STIRRUP LEATHERS

The dominant hand in flat-B-handshape makes an entering motion into the palm of the non-dominant hand.



STRETCH

Using both hands in B-handshape, your hands make a stretching motion.



**TACK: PUT UP THE SADDLE &
BRIDLE**

**Verb: Dominant hand in X-
handshape motions to hang an
imaginary saddle or bridle.**

Noun: Fingerspell T-A-C-K.



TAKE

Starting with flat-B-handshape, the dominant hands moves backward as if taking an object and ends in S-handshape.

THANK YOU

In flat-B-handshape, the dominant hand starts at the signer's chin area and ends at a space in front of the signer's chest away from the chin area.





THROATLATCH

**The dominant hand in bent-L-
handshape makes two small latching
motions on the chin line.**

TIGHTEN GIRTH

TIGHTEN: Both hands in S-handshape clasp together as if tightening a girth.



GIRTH (Variation #1): Both hands in H-handshape on the chest move slightly away from each other.

GIRTH (Variation #2): A fingerspelled sign.



TO PUT BRIDLE ON THE HORSE

VARIATION #1: In 1-handshape, the dominant hand touches the lips.

VARIATION #2: In bent-L-handshape, the dominant hand touches the nose and chin area.



TO PUT SADDLE ON THE HORSE

The dominant hand in C-handshape lands on the non-dominant hand as if “putting a saddle on”.





TOES UP

Both hands in B-handshape bend upward as if feet are on toes.



TOUCH

The dominant hand makes a touching motion on the non-dominant hand as if touching a horse.



TRAIL RIDE

Both hands in bent-2-handshape make a “walking” motion as if a horse is trotting on a trail.

TROT

Both hands in 1-handshape make a “walking” motion as if a horse’s legs are trotting.



TURN

SIGN #1: The dominant hand makes a right turn.

SIGN #2: The dominant hand makes a left turn.

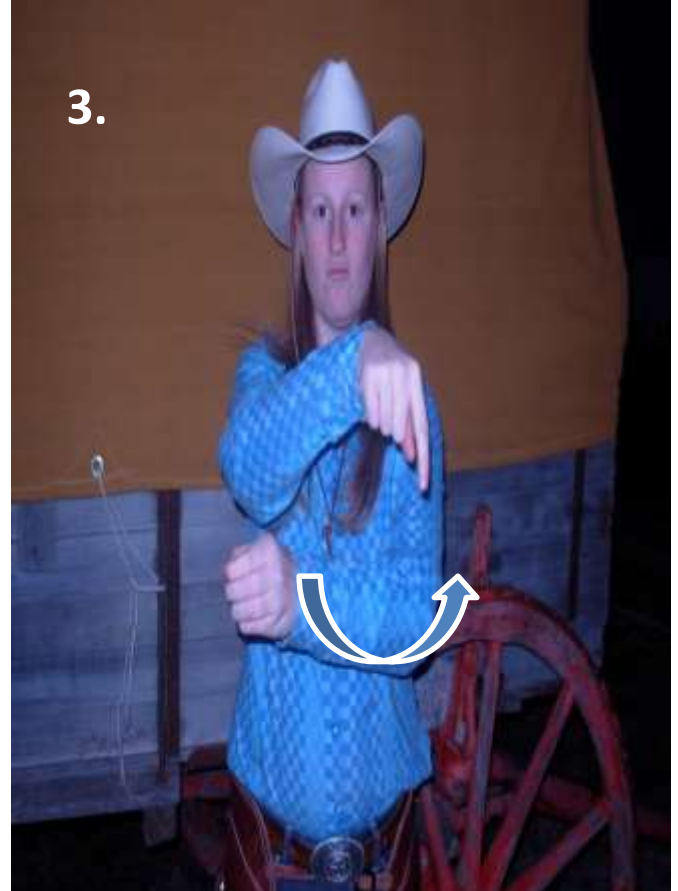
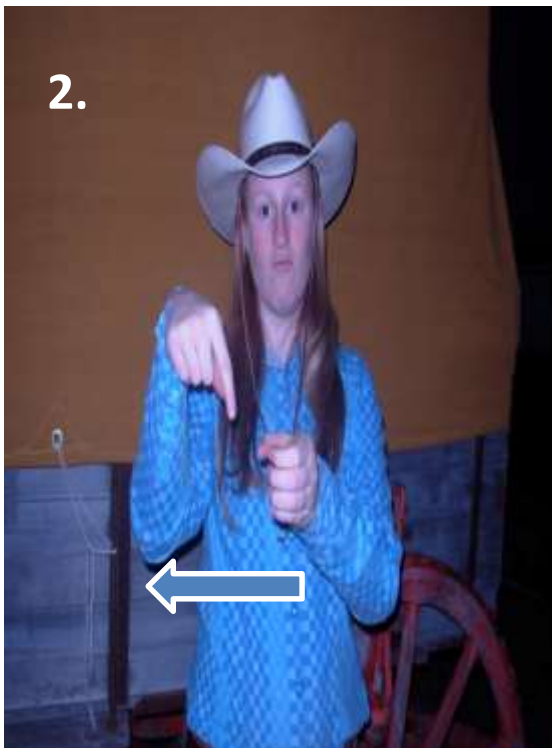


TWO POINT POSITION

STEP 1: Both hands in C-handshape act as a barrel set-up.

STEP 2: The C-handshape non-dominant hand moves to the right.

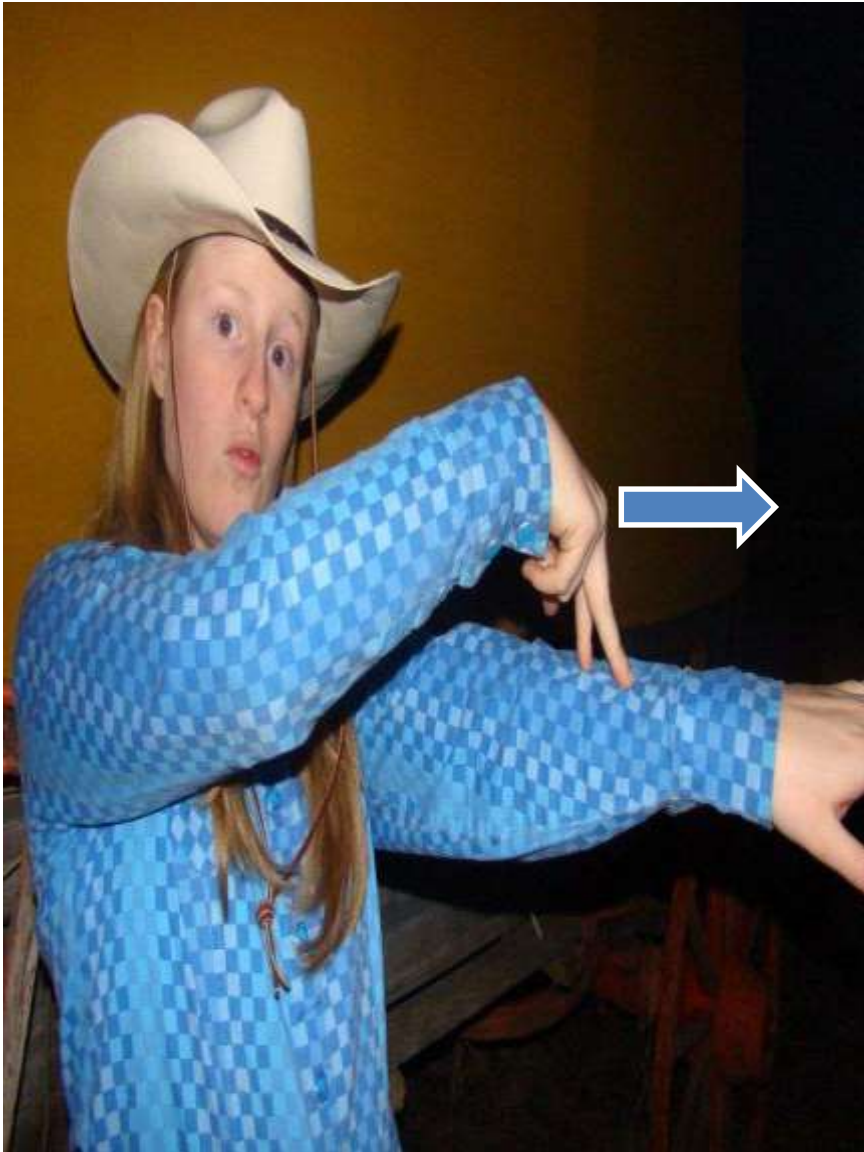
STEP 3: While the non-dominant hand moves to the right, the 1-handshape dominant hand moves to the left as if making a two-point-position movement.



WALK

Two hands in flat-B-handshape, representing feet, make repeated “walking” motion.





WALK ON

The 2-handshape dominant hand makes a “walking” motion on the non-dominant arm as if walking on a platform.



WATCH OUT; WATCH WHERE YOU ARE GOING

Both hands in 2-handshape, representing eyes, make a “look out/watch out” motion.

WEAVE

STEP 1: Both hands in flat-B-handshape, representing two horses, prepare to weave.

STEP 2: Both hands swerve into each other and ends in opposite direction.

STEP 3: Then both hands move forward.



WESTERN SADDLE

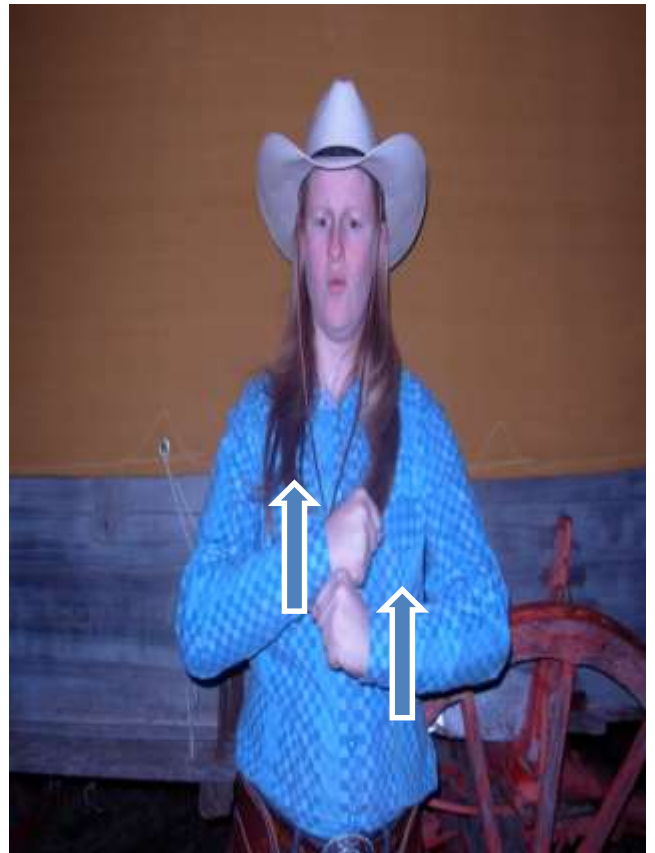
The dominant hand in W-handshape makes a small repeated motion.

The dominant hand lands on the non-dominant hand as if “putting a saddle on”.



WHOA

Both hands in S-handshape clasp make a slight upward motion as if pulling a saddle horn to tell a horse to stop.



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