

Patient information factsheet

Finger flexor tendon injury

We have given you this factsheet because you have sustained a finger flexor tendon injury and have had an operation to repair the injury. It explains what finger flexor tendons are and how to care for your fingers after your operation. We hope it will help to answer some of the questions you may have. If you have any further questions or concerns, please contact us using the details at the end of this factsheet.

Finger flexor tendons

Tendons are tough cords of tissue that connect muscles to bones. Finger flexor tendons are tendons that run from your forearm over your wrist and across the palm of your hand to your fingers. These tendons allow you to bend your fingers and form a fist.

Recovery

You have had an operation to repair your damaged tendon(s). It will take a minimum of 12 weeks for the tendon(s) to heal fully. During this time, there is a risk that the tendon(s) could rupture (break) and your fingers could become stiff. To reduce this risk, we will give you a thermoplastic lightweight splint to wear at your first appointment after your operation.

Caring for your splint

Your splint will be moulded on the back of your hand and you will have to wear this splint at all times (day and night) for the first six weeks.

You must wear your splint in the shower or bath unless we have told you otherwise. Please note that the splint is splashproof only so it must **not** be submerged in water. You should keep your arm, with the splint on, out of the water when showering or bathing.

We will advise you on how to clean your splint.

Caring for your scar

Once your wound is fully healed, we will show you how to massage your scar. Scar massage is a way of softening and flattening scars. It can also help to improve the flexibility and mobility of scars.

Exercises

We have included the exercises below to help with your recovery. Depending on your progress, we may add further exercises to the ones included in this factsheet.

1. Using your uninjured hand to help, gently bend each finger of your injured hand into your palm and hold for three to five seconds. Gently let go and straighten your fingers to the splint without help from your uninjured hand.



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Repeat _____ times every hour.

2. Bend your wrist forwards slightly (away from the splint). With your other hand, block your fingers at the back of your knuckles. Then straighten your fingers from the middle knuckle as shown in the picture below.



Repeat _____ times every hour.

3. Gently bend all the fingers of your injured hand half-way into your palm (but do not squeeze into a fist). Then straighten your fingers to the splint without help from your uninjured hand.



Repeat _____ times every hour.

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As well as performing the exercises above, you will also need to:

- keep your operated arm elevated as much as possible
- perform regular shoulder and elbow range of movement exercises (we will show you how to do this at your hand therapy appointment)

Frequently asked questions

When can I return to my normal daily activities?

You will not be able to use your hand for any activity, including gripping or lifting, for the first six weeks after your operation. We will guide you on how to begin using your hand again after six weeks.

When can I resume driving?

You will not be able to drive for the first eight weeks after your operation.

When can I return to work?

You will be able to return to heavy manual work or any contact sports after 12 weeks. You may be able to return to lighter work (for example, office work) after eight weeks. If you're not sure, please contact us for advice.

Contact us

If you have any further questions or concerns, please contact us.

Hand therapy team

Telephone: **023 8120 6459** (Monday to Friday, 8am to 5pm)

For any concerns regarding your wound, please contact your GP or practice nurse for advice.

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For help preparing for your visit, arranging an interpreter or accessing the hospital, please visit **www.uhs.nhs.uk/additionalsupport**

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