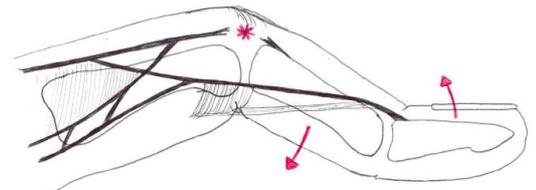


Hand Therapy after central slip repair

This leaflet is for patients who have had a surgical repair of the central slip to one or more fingers. It explains what you can do to ensure the best possible recovery. If you have any further questions, please speak to the hand therapist caring for you.

What is the central slip?

The central slip tendon enables you to straighten the middle joint of your finger. Without the central slip working your finger may develop a deformity called a boutonniere (button-hole).



Boutonniere deformity

What is short arc motion?

Short arc motion is an exercise that involves controlled movement at the middle joint of the affected finger(s) following your tendon repair. Exercising the finger(s) is important for preventing stiffness and encourages the central slip to glide gently after surgery; however it is also very important that you do not over-exercise the finger(s), as this may damage the tendon repair.

Please ensure that you only exercise as instructed by your therapist. Following his/her instructions post-surgery will help you regain the best possible function in the long term.

Before you start

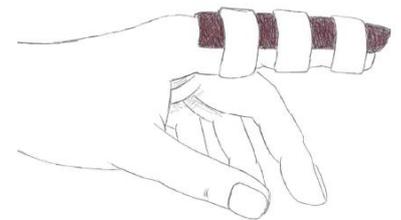
There are some additional instructions that you need to follow before beginning your exercises. These are concerned with looking after your **splint** and looking after your **wound**.

- **Looking after your splint**

A thermoplastic splint has been made to hold both joints of your finger straight to allow the central slip to heal. This is called **post-op splint** (see right).

You must wear this splint **at all times** for **four weeks** following surgery. Do not remove the splint without the advice of your therapist. It is important that you do not get the splint hot or wet.

Do not try to alter it in any way, or take it off for any reason, as this can increase the risk of damaging the repair.



A second splint will be made for exercises only. Your therapist will instruct you on how to use it (see overleaf).

- **Looking after your wound**

To assist with healing, your wound will be left with minimal or no dressings. It is therefore important that you keep your wound clean and dry until it is healed, as this will help to prevent infection. Your stitches will be removed by a nurse at your GP surgery or in the hand unit 10-14 days after surgery.

Your exercises

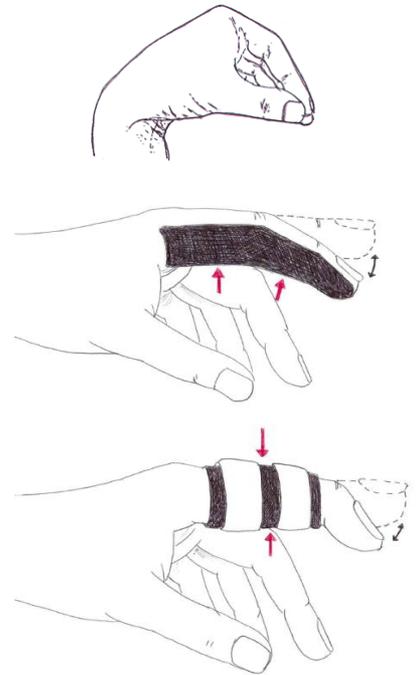
For all exercises please keep your wrist bent gently forwards (see right).

Exercise 1 (using exercise splint 1):

Remove your post-op splint, keeping your finger straight. Place exercise splint 1 at the base of your finger and hold in place (see arrows). Gently bend your finger so it touches the exercise splint (see right) then straighten the finger fully away from the splint.

Exercise 2 (using exercise splint 2):

Place exercise splint 2 on your finger and use your un-injured hand to hold around the splint, supporting the middle joint of your finger (see arrows). Then using the muscles of your injured hand, gently bend the top joint of your finger (see right).



How often should I do my exercises?

Please complete each exercise _____ times and hold for _____ seconds each time.
Repeat _____ times a day.

Additional instructions

Swelling

Swelling (oedema) is the body's normal response to an injury or surgery. It is important to minimise this by keeping your hand elevated as much as possible. Your therapist may also give you a compression wrap to wear over your finger to assist with reducing the swelling. Please use the compression wrap as follows:

Other notes

- You should use your unaffected fingers for light activities only.
- If you notice the finger is not straightening, stop the exercises and contact the department as soon as possible.
- Do not drive until eight weeks following surgery.
- No contact sports or heavy lifting until twelve weeks following surgery.

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about the information provided in this leaflet, please feel free to discuss them with your therapist at your next appointment. For more urgent queries the team can be contact in the **treatment enquiries** phone number listed below.

Your therapist's name is: _____

Treatment enquiries: 020 8725 1038 (answer phone only)
Appointments: 020 8725 3000

Additional services

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you on-the-spot advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or the care you have received. You can visit the PALS office between 9.30am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday in the main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough Wing (near the lift foyer).

Tel: 020 8725 2453 **Email:** pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk

NHS Choices

NHS Choices provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health.

Web: www.nhs.uk

NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

Tel: 111

