

Early active motion following finger flexor tendon repair

This leaflet explains more about the surgical repair of any of the finger flexor tendons and how to make sure you have the best possible recovery. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to your therapist.

The tendon or tendons that you have had repaired help your finger(s) to bend into a fist. Following the instructions below will help make sure you get as much movement back as possible.

What is early active motion?

Early active motion involves exercising (bending and straightening) the affected fingers soon after your tendon repair. Exercising your fingers is important for preventing stiffness and for encouraging the repaired tendon(s) to work after surgery; however it is also very important that you do not over-exercise the fingers, as this may damage the tendon repair.

Please ensure that you only exercise as instructed by your therapist. Following their instructions post-surgery will help you to 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 (supporting device) has been made for you to help protect your repaired tendon(s). It is important that you wear your splint **at all times** (even when sleeping) for four weeks after your operation. Do not remove the splint before speaking to your therapist. It is important that you do not get your 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 to your fingers.

- **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

Undo the strap across your fingers to complete the following exercises:

1



2



1. Using your unaffected hand, push the fingers of your affected hand one-by-one into your palm.
2. Slowly straighten your fingers up to the roof of the splint.

3



4



3. Using the muscles of your affected hand, gently make a fist with all your fingers.
4. Slowly straighten your fingers up to the roof of the splint.

Please note that you are not expected to be able to make a full fist until around four weeks post-surgery.

Do up the strap across your fingers after you have completed your exercises. **DO NOT USE THE STRAP TO PUSH YOUR FINGERS STRAIGHT.**

How often should I do my exercises?

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

Repeat _____ times per day.

Additional instructions

General instructions:

- **DO** remove or loosen the top finger strap when sleeping.
- **DO NOT** push your fingers straight with your other hand, as this can damage your tendon repair.
- **DO NOT** use your hand for anything other than your exercises.
- **DO NOT** drive until advised by your therapist or doctor.

Contact us

If you have any questions about recovery after surgical repair of your finger flexor tendon, please contact treatment enquiries on 020 8725 1038 (answer phone only, please leave a message and someone will get back to you as soon as possible). For appointment enquiries, please contact 020 8725 3000.

Your therapist's name is _____

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.stgeorges.nhs.uk

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



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