Early Active Motion following a Central Slip Tendon Repair

This leaflet explains how to protect your tendon repair and the exercises which will optimise your potential recovery after central slip extensor tendon surgery. This sets a foundation for recovery and for a return to your usual activities of daily living.

What is the central slip?
The central slip is a part of your extensor tendon that 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).

What is early active motion?
Early active motion is a set of exercises around bending and straightening the affected finger(s) following your central slip repair.

Moving and exercising your finger(s) is essential to prevent stiffness and to encourage the repaired tendon(s) to glide again after surgery.

Movement has also been shown to promote better tendon healing.

It is also very important not to over-exercise your fingers, as this may damage the tendon repair. Therefore please ensure that you only exercise as instructed by your therapist.

Following your therapist’s instructions will help you to get back as much movement in your fingers as possible, over time.

Looking after my splint
A thermoplastic splint (supporting device) has been made for you to help protect your repaired tendon(s).

You must wear your splint at all times (even when sleeping) for four weeks after your operation. Do not remove the splint without the advice of your therapist.

You must not get the splint hot or wet, try to alter it in any way or take it off for any reason (including when sleeping and bathing) as this can increase the risk of damaging the repair.

You must wear the splint full time until ______________.
A second splint will be made for exercises only. Your therapist will instruct you on how to use it (see below).

**Looking after my wound**
Your wound will be left with minimal or no dressings to aid healing. If your stitches need to be removed, this can be done either by a nurse at your GP surgery or in the Hand Unit, 10–14 days after surgery. If you are unsure, please confirm with your therapist.

To prevent infection, you must keep your wound clean and dry until it is healed.

**Will I be in pain?**
You may have some mild pain after surgery and during your exercises, which is a normal part of the recovery. Please take any pain killers you have been given as prescribed by a doctor.

**Will I need to do any specific exercises?**
For all exercises please keep your wrist bent gently forwards (see image on right).

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

**Exercise 2**
Place your post-op splint back onto your finger, but leave the distal two straps undone. Use your uninjured hand to support the middle joint straight (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 per day.
What else should I do and not do?

- **DO** use your unaffected fingers for light activities.
- **STOP** your exercises if you notice that you cannot straighten the finger as before and contact the department as soon as possible.
- **DO NOT** return to contact sports or heavy lifting until advised by your therapist or doctor.
- **DO NOT** drive until advised by your therapist or doctor.

Contact us

If you have any questions about your recovery, please feel free to discuss them with your therapist at your next appointment. For more urgent queries the team can be contacted on contact **treatment enquiries** phone number listed below.

Your therapist’s name is __________________________

Treatment enquiries: 020 8725 1038  
Appointments: 020 8725 0007

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