

Rehabilitation after a Thumb Ligament Repair

Information for patients weaning from splinting post-surgery

This leaflet explains about returning to your everyday activities when reducing protective splinting after your thumb ligament repair. If you have any further questions, please speak to a doctor, nurse or therapist caring for you.

How is my ligament healing?

Your ligament is now strong enough for controlled, light use, but can still be damaged if over-used.

When should I wear my splint?

A thermoplastic splint was made for you to help keep your thumb in a safe position after surgery.

You should now only wear the splint at night and for protection (e.g., on public transport and in busy places like shops) for another two weeks.

How should I look after my scar?

It is important to continue to massage the scar to prevent it from sticking to underlying structures and making movement difficult.

Massage the scar using a water-based cream (e.g., E45, Nivea or Diprobase) in a deep, circular motion for at least 30 minutes a day.

You can break this down into smaller chunks of time throughout the day if you need to do so, e.g., 10 minutes in the morning, 10 minutes at lunchtime and 10 minutes before bed.

Will I be in pain?

Any pain after your operation should settle down over the first few months. Massaging your scar can be uncomfortable at times but please carry on as it will really help you to get the best result.

How should I be using my hand day-to-day?

You should now begin to use your hand for **light**, clean activities out of your splint. If you are lifting objects, they should weigh no more than one kilogram (two pounds).

Examples of activity demands are as follows:

LIGHT ACTIVITIES <1 Kg
Personal
Washing, shaving
Fastening zips, buttons
Putting on light clothes
Using fork, spoon
Combing hair
Putting on socks, tights
Tying shoelaces
Holding a plastic glass
Doing makeup
Other activities
Writing, signing, typing
Using a remote control
Dusting
Using the telephone, texting
Handling money
Playing cards, jigsaw puzzles

MEDIUM ACTIVITIES 2-3 Kg
Domestic
Washing up, wiping up
Using keys
Hanging washing out
Sweeping up
Using spray bottle
Light meal prep
Washing, blow drying hair
Other activities
Using door handle
Using scissors
Holding a pint glass / cup of tea
Drawing, painting
Using towel
Reading books

HEAVY ACTIVITIES >5 Kg
Domestic
Using a knife
Lifting a saucepan, kettle
Cooking
Ironing/Vacuuuming
Lifting boxes, carrying shopping
Making a bed
Using a tin opener
Opening a new jar/bottle top / hotwater bottle
Ring-pull on a can
Other activities
Lifting children
Playing video games
Using hand tools (screwdriver) / Gardening
Sports: rugby, football, swimming, golf, gym
Using power tools
Pushing a shopping trolley/buggy

Will I need to do any specific exercises?

Your therapist will advise you on specific exercises to help regain movement and use of the thumb.

Please ensure you only exercise and use your hand as your therapist has told you.

What else should I do and not do?

- **DO NOT** push your thumb in any direction with your other hand, as this can damage your ligament repair.
- **DO NOT** drive for another until advised by your therapist or surgeon.

Additional instructions

Will I have a follow-up appointment?

You will continue to have regular appointments under the care of the hand therapy team as needed.

Contact us

If you have any questions about recovery after the surgical repair of your thumb ligament, 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 0007.

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 advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or care. You can contact the PALS team on the advisory telephone line Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 2pm to 5pm.

A Walk-in service is available:

Monday, Tuesday and Thursday between 10am and 4pm

Friday between 10am and 2pm.

Please contact PALS in advance to check if there are any changes to opening times.

The Walk-in and Advisory telephone services are closed on Wednesdays.

PALS is based within the hospital in the ground floor main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough Wing.

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



AccessAble

You can download accessibility guides for all our services by searching 'St George's Hospital' on the AccessAble website (www.accessable.co.uk). The guides are designed to ensure everyone – including those with accessibility needs – can access our hospital and community sites with confidence.

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