

Hand Therapy after Finger Extensor Tendon Repair

Relative motion splinting after surgery

This leaflet is for patients who have had an extensor tendon repair to the finger(s) of their hand under the care of St George's Hospital. It explains what you can do to ensure the best possible recovery. If you have any further questions, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you.

What is Relative Motion Splinting?

The tendon(s) that you have had repaired enable you to straighten your fingers. Relative motion splinting allows you to exercise the affected finger(s) in a protective splint after repair. Exercising your finger(s) is important for preventing stiffness and encouraging the tendons to glide after surgery, however it is also very important that you do not over-exercises the finger(s), as this may damage the tendon repair.

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**

Two splints have been made to protect the surgical repair that you have undergone. It is important that you wear **both splints at all times** (even when sleeping) for three weeks after your operation. Do not remove the splints without the advice of your therapist.

It is important that you do not get your splints hot or wet. **Do not** try to alter them in any way or take either of your splints off for any reason as this can increase the risk of damaging the repair of your thumb.

- **Looking after your wound**

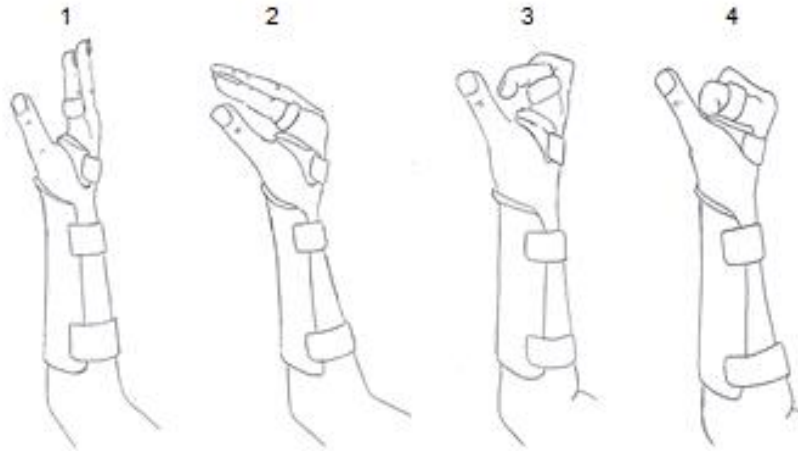
Your wound will be left with minimal or no dressings to aid healing.

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 to 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.

Exercises

Please ensure 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.



1. Straighten all fingers.
2. Bend fingers into a 'table' position by bending the big knuckles and keeping the other finger joints straight.
3. Gently bend fingers into a hook (keeping the big knuckles straight).
4. Gently make a fist.

How often should I do my exercises?

Please complete each exercise _____ times and hold each position for ____ seconds.
Repeat _____ times/day.

Additional Information:

You can use your hand for very light activities weighing less than 1kg. For example, getting dressed, doing up zips and buttons, tying shoelaces, typing and eating a meal. You are not allowed to drive until eight weeks post-surgery.

General instructions

- **Do not** push your fingers into a bend as this could damage your repaired tendon
- **Do not** over work your hand during exercises or light activities
- Only exercise as instructed by your therapist
- **Do not** drive.

Contact us

If you have any questions regarding 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 contacted on the **treatment** enquiries phone number listed below.

Your therapist's name is _____

Treatment enquiries: 020 8725 1038 (answering machine only)
Appointments: 020 8725 0007

Or scan
here



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 9am and 5pm, 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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