

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 your finger(s) 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-exercise 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 always** (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 finger.

- **Looking after your wound**

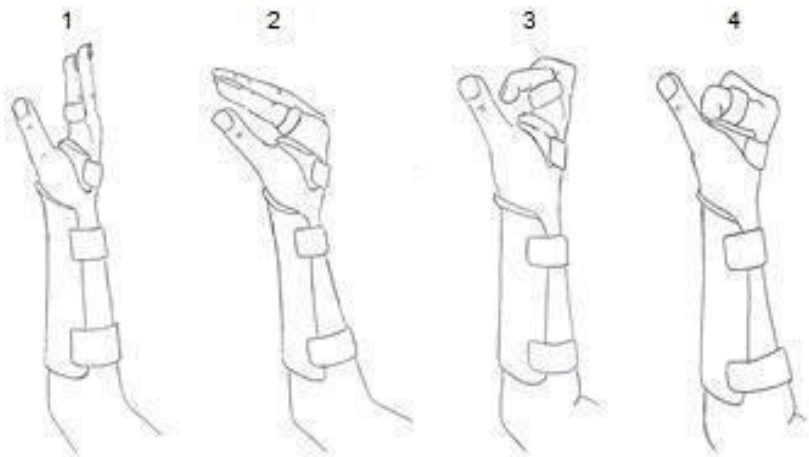
Your wound will be left with minimal or no dressings to aid healing.

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 to 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 per day.

General instructions

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

Additional Information:

You can use your hand for very light activities weighing less than 1kg. You are not allowed to drive until eight weeks post-surgery. Please see table below for guidance.

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/Vacuuming
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

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 is _____

Treatment enquiries: 020 8725 1038

Appointments: 020 8725 0007



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

Was this information helpful? Yes / No

Please let us know, contact patient.information@stgeorges.nhs.uk and include the leaflet title.

Thank you.

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.

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

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

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

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

NHS UK

The NHS 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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