

# Finger Flexor Tendon Repair

## Early active movement after surgery

This leaflet is for patients who have had a flexor tendon(s) repair to one of their fingers 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 the therapist caring for you.

### What is early active movement?

The tendon(s) that you have had repaired enable you to bend your fingers. Early active movement 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**

A thermoplastic splint has been made to 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 splints without the advice of your therapist.

You must wear the splint full time until \_\_\_\_\_

It is important that you do not get your splint hot or wet. Do not try to alter it in any way or take your splint off for any reason as this can increase the risk of damaging the repaired tendon(s).

- **Looking after your wound**

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

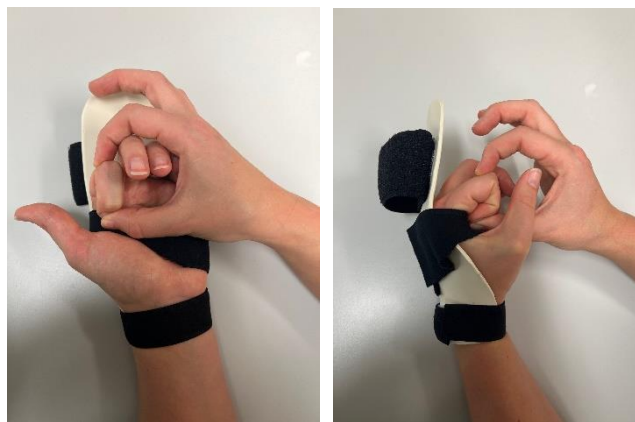
If your stitches need to be removed, this can be done either by a nurse at your GP surgery or in the Hand Unit, 10 to 14 days after surgery. If you are unsure, please ask your therapist.

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. Only undo the top strap across the fingers and complete all exercises with your splint on:

1. Push each of the fingers, one at a time, into a bend, using your other hand. Then slowly straighten your fingers up to the back of the splint.



2. Bending your wrist backwards, gently bend all the fingers, starting movement at the tips, into a hook position.



3. Bending your wrist forwards, straighten all the fingers to touch the back of the splint, relax fingers as you bring your wrist into a straight position.



4. With your wrist in a neutral position, gently try to make a fist with all the fingers. Then straighten all the fingers to the roof of your splint.



After you have completed your exercises, put the top strap back on.

**Please note** that it is normal not to be able to make a full fist for the first four to six weeks after surgery.

## How often should I do my exercises?

- Please complete each exercise \_\_\_\_\_ times.
- Hold each position for \_\_\_\_\_ seconds.
- Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times per day.

## General instructions

- **Only** exercise / use your hand as instructed by your therapist.
- **You can use** your hand for light functional tasks (maximum 1kg) **but exclude your affected finger(s).**
- **DO NOT** try to push your fingers straight with your other hand.
- **DO NOT** use the strap to push your fingers straight.
- **DO NOT** over-work your hand during exercises or light activities.
- **DO NOT** drive until eight weeks post-surgery.

## 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  
Appointments: 020 8725 0007



For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit [www.stgeorges.nhs.uk](http://www.stgeorges.nhs.uk)

## Was this information helpful? Yes / No

Please let us know, contact [patient.information@stgeorges.nhs.uk](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://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](http://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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