

Early Active Motion following Finger Flexor Tendon Repair

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

What is early active motion?

Early active motion is a set of exercises around bending and straightening the affected fingers following your tendon repair. Moving and exercising your fingers 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.

Please make sure to follow your therapist's instructions carefully when exercising. Following their instructions will help you gradually regain as much movement in your fingers as possible.

Looking after my splint

A thermoplastic splint has been made for you to help protect your repaired tendon(s). You must **always** wear your splint (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 _____

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 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.

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?

Undo the strap across your fingers to complete the following exercises:

- ☐ Using your unaffected hand, push the fingers of your affected hand one at a time, into your palm. Slowly straighten your fingers up to the roof of the splint.



- ☐ Using the muscles of your affected hand, gently make a fist with all your fingers. Slowly straighten your fingers up to the roof of the splint. Do not force the fingers straight with your other hand.



- ☐ Remove the top two straps on your splint (keep the two forearm straps secured). Gently bend your wrist forwards and then backwards back into the splint. Keep your fingers relaxed throughout, focus on your wrist movement only.



- Bend your main knuckles down and then place the lolly stick along the back of the affected finger. Relax your fingers into a bend and then straighten your finger back up to the lolly stick. Remember to keep your main knuckle bent and only straighten the smaller joints in your finger.



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

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

How often should I do my exercises?

- Please complete each exercise_____times.
- Hold each position for_____seconds.
- Repeat_____times per day.

Other instructions

What else should I do and not do?

- **DO** remove or loosen the top finger strap when sleeping.
- **DO NOT** push your fingers straight with your other hand, as this can damage your tendon repair.
- **DO NOT** use the strap to push your fingers straight.
- **DO NOT** use your hand for anything other than your exercises.
- **DO NOT** drive until 8 weeks post-surgery.

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 the **treatment enquiries** telephone 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

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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