

Finger Flexor Tendon Repair

Relative motion splinting after surgery

This leaflet is for patients who have had a flexor tendon 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 Relative Motion Splinting?

The tendon(s) that you have had repaired enable you to bend your fingers. Relative motion splinting allows you to exercise the affected finger in a protective splint after repair. Exercising your finger 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, 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 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 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 repaired tendon.

- **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**. Do all exercises with **both splints on**:



- 1) Keeping the fingers straight, gently push the fingers into a 'hook' bend, one at a time.



- 2) With the **main knuckles bent forward**, gently straighten the affected finger.



- 3) Gently try to straighten all the fingers and hold this for a few seconds. Then try to move all fingers into a bend and hold for a few seconds before restarting.

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.

Additional information:

You can use your hand for very light activities weighing less than 1kg. Please see the table below for guidance.

LIGHT ACTIVITIES <1 Kg	MEDIUM ACTIVITIES 2-3 Kg	HEAVY ACTIVITIES >5 Kg
Personal	Domestic	Domestic
Washing, shaving	Washing up, wiping up	Using a knife
Fastening zips, buttons	Using keys	Lifting a saucepan, kettle
Putting on light clothes	Hanging washing out	Cooking
Using fork, spoon	Sweeping up	Ironing/Vacuuming
Combing hair	Using spray bottle	Lifting boxes, carrying shopping
Putting on socks, tights	Light meal prep	Making a bed
Tying shoelaces	Washing, blow drying hair	Using a tin opener
Holding a plastic glass		Opening a new jar/bottle top / hot water bottle
Doing makeup		Ring-pull on a can
		Deodorant / aerosol spray
Other activities	Other activities	Other activities
Writing, signing, typing	Using door handle	Lifting children
Using a remote control	Using scissors	Playing video / computer games
Dusting	Holding a pint glass / cup of tea	Using hand tools (screwdriver) / Gardening
Using the telephone, texting	Drawing, painting	Sports: rugby, football, swimming, golf, gym
Handling money	Using a towel	Using power tools
Playing cards, jigsaw puzzles	Reading books	Pushing a shopping trolley/buggy

General instructions:

- **Only** exercise as instructed by your therapist.
- **You can use** your hand for light functional tasks (maximum 1kg) but exclude your affected finger(s).
- **DO NOT** push your fingers straight with your other hand, apart from the exercises.
- **DO NOT** overuse 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

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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