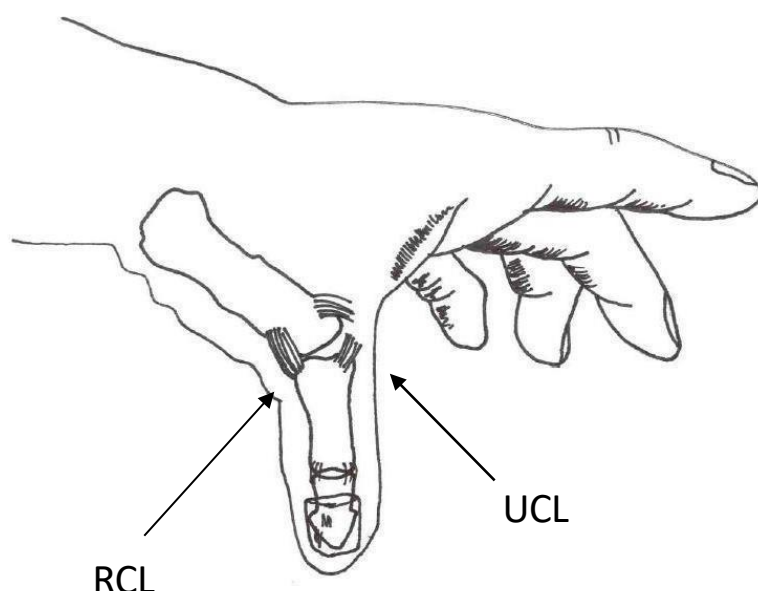


Thumb Ligament Surgical Repair

This leaflet is for patients who have had a surgical repair of the collateral ligament of their thumb and are 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 your therapist.

What is a collateral ligament injury?



There are two ligaments that support the joint at the base of your thumb; these are known as the radial collateral ligament (RCL) and the ulnar collateral ligament (UCL). These ligaments are located at the base of the thumb in the web space between the thumb and the index finger (see picture) and provide support and stability to the thumb during movement.

The ligaments can be damaged if the thumb is forced away from your hand e.g., if your hand is hit with a ball or you fall while skiing.

Surgical repair of the collateral ligament injury

Surgery to repair the collateral ligament is required if the ligament is completely disrupted. Your thumb needs this ligament to maintain stability in functional grips like lifting a glass and pinching. Surgery is sometimes necessary to ensure this ligament heals and can then contribute to the stability of your thumb.

How should I look after my wound?

Following your operation, you will have a wound at the base of your thumb. To help with healing, your wound will be left with only a small dressing or no dressing on it.

Your stitches may be dissolvable. If not, they will need to be taken out 10 to 14 days after your operation. This may be done either by a nurse at the hand unit or by your GP practice nurse.

How should I look after my splint?

A thermoplastic splint has been made for you to help protect your thumb and to keep it immobilised while the ligament heals.

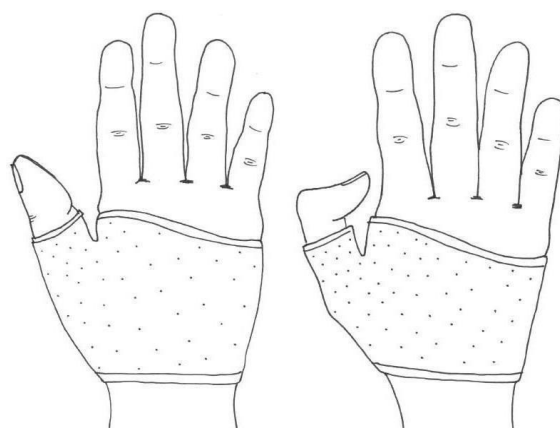
You must wear this splint **all the time** for up to six weeks, even in bed when sleeping or in the bath or shower.

You must not get this splint hot, wet or try to alter it in any way.

Your exercises

Please ensure you only exercise as instructed by your therapist.

1. Bend and straighten the tip of the thumb with the splint on (see diagram).
2. Bend and straighten the fingers over the splint.
3. Keep your wrist elbow and shoulder moving.



How often should I do my exercises?

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

General instructions

- Only exercise as instructed by your therapist
- **Do not** drive until advised to do so by your therapist.

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** telephone 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

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.



Reference: HAN_TLR_03 **Published:** June 2025 **Review date:** June 2027