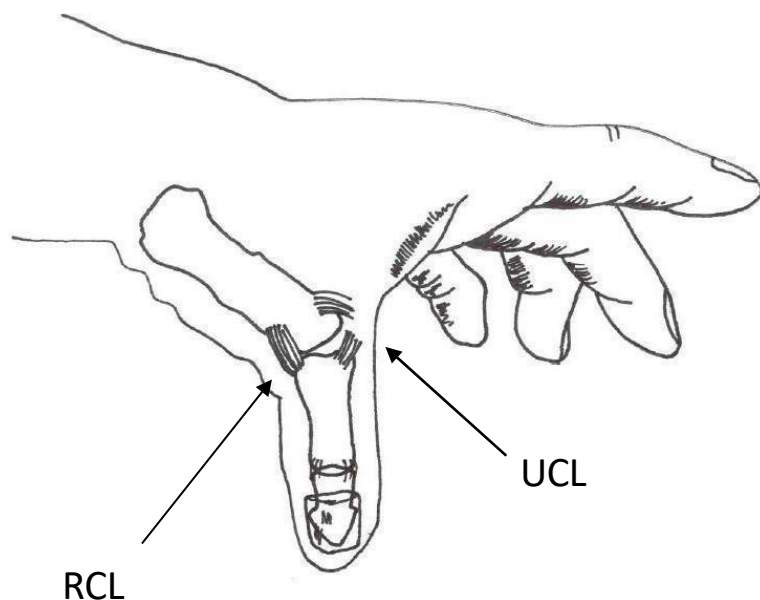


# Thumb Collateral Ligament Injury

This leaflet provides information about the management of a thumb collateral ligament injury and explains what to do to help your recovery. If you have any further questions or concerns, 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.

The injury causes pain and tenderness at the base of your thumb, because the ligament has been either partially torn (sprained) or a small piece of bone has been pulled off by the ligament (avulsed).

## What treatments are available?

The aim of treatment is to promote healing and minimise long term stiffness, so that your thumb works properly and you can carry out actions safely, e.g. lifting a glass. Many ligament injuries can be managed conservatively with supportive splinting.

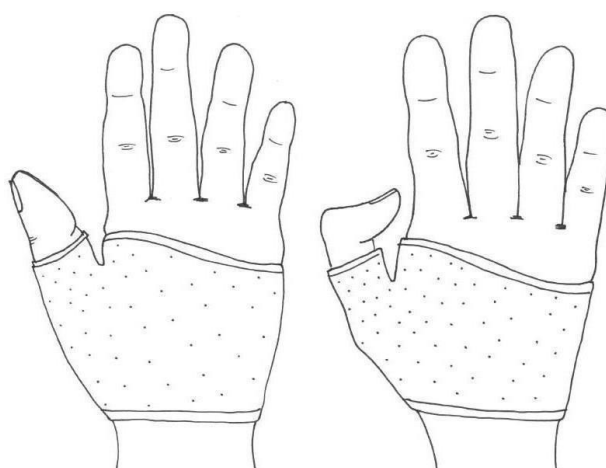
## How should I look after my splint?

A thermoplastic splint has been made for you to help protect your thumb and keep it immobilised while the ligament heals. You must wear this splint all the time for up to six weeks, even in bed or in the bath or shower. You must not get this splint hot, wet or try to alter it in any way.

## Your exercises

**Make sure you do your exercises exactly as your therapist has said.**

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



## How often should I do my exercises?

Complete each exercise \_\_\_\_\_ times and hold each position for \_\_\_\_\_ seconds.  
Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times a day.

## Remember

- Only exercise exactly as your therapist has said.
- **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](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.

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## 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.



**Reference:** HAN\_UCL\_04 **Published:** June 2025 **Review date:** June 2027