

Hand therapy department

Finger flexor tendon repairs – advice on removal of splint

Your tendons are becoming stronger but are still not fully healed. It will take a further four weeks for the tendon(s) to heal. Once healed, it will be another three to five weeks before you can return to heavy activities.

This leaflet describes some exercises you should do each day to help your finger to heal. It also tells you what you should and should not do. If you need further information or advice, please do not hesitate to contact your hand therapist.

Exercises



Complete these exercises _____. Repeat each exercise _____ times.

Definitions:

Actively* = moving a finger joint by yourself without help from your other/unaffected hand.

Passively** = using your other/unaffected hand to move a joint.

- Place your hand on the table with your palm facing upwards. **Actively** straighten all your fingers so that your fingertips just touch the table. Do not use your other hand to straighten your finger.
- **Actively** bend the top two joints of your fingers keeping the knuckles straight.
- Keeping your fingers straight, **actively** bend the knuckles of your hand.
- **Actively** bend and straighten your wrist and tilt it side to side. Do not use your other hand.

Do

- ✓ Following your hand therapist's instructions, start using your hand for light activities, such as using light switches and handling money. Please ask your hand therapist for a copy of the unit's **Activity List** which explains which activities are defined as 'light' and 'heavy'.
- ✓ Continue to wear your splint at night, when you go out and at any time when your hand may be knocked, for example on public transport or in crowded places, for another three weeks.
- ✓ Very carefully wash and dry your hand as instructed by your hand therapist.
- ✓ Massage the scar with a non-perfumed moisturising cream such as E45, Nivea or aqueous cream.
- ✓ Discuss with your hand therapist when you can start specific activities.

Do not

- ✗ Straighten your fingers and wrist with your other hand (**no passive straightening**).
- ✗ Use your affected hand for any activity that offers any resistance.
- ✗ Use your affected hand for any medium or heavy activities. Ask your hand therapist when you can begin specific activities.
- ✗ Do any repetitive activities. You may sign your name but you **must not** write a letter.
- ✗ Drive until instructed that it is safe to do so by your therapist.

Note: It is important to follow these instructions or you risk damaging the repaired tendon(s).

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the **hand therapy department** on **020 7188 4172** or **020 7188 4174**, Monday to Friday 8am to 5pm

Useful sources of information

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

To make comments or raise concerns about the Trust's services, please contact PALS. Ask a member of staff to direct you to the PALS office or:

e: 020 7188 8801 at St Thomas' **t:** 020 7188 8803 at Guy's **e:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk

Knowledge & Information Centre (KIC)

For more information about health conditions, support groups and local services, or to search the internet and send emails, please visit the KIC on the Ground Floor, North Wing, St Thomas' Hospital.

t: 020 7188 3416

Language support services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch using the following contact details.

t: 020 7188 8815 **fax:** 020 7188 5953

NHS Direct – Offers health information and advice from specially trained nurses over the phone 24 hours a day.

t: 0845 4647 **w:** www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

NHS Choices

Provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make choices about your health.

w: www.nhs.uk