

## Hand therapy department

# Thumb extensor repairs – advice on removal of splint

Your tendon(s) is becoming stronger but is still not fully healed. It will take a further eight weeks for the tendon(s) to heal and before you can return to heavy activities.

This sheet describes some exercises you should do each day to help your thumb 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 call your hand therapist using the number on the back page.

## Exercises



Complete these exercises \_\_\_\_\_ times every hour.

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

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

- **Actively** make a full fist with your fingers and thumb. Do not push your thumb down.
- **Actively** touch your thumb tip to each fingertip and to the base of the little finger. Do not push your thumb down.
- **Actively** stretch your thumb out wide from the palm.
- **Actively** bend and straighten your wrist.

## 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.
- ✓ 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.
- ✓ Continue to massage your scar vigorously with a non-perfumed moisturising cream, such as Nivea, E45 or aqueous cream, following your hand therapist's advice.

## Don't

- ✗ Do not bend your thumb and wrist with the other hand (no passive bending).
- ✗ Do not use your affected hand for any activity that offers any resistance.
- ✗ Do not use your affected hand for any medium or heavy activities. Ask your hand therapist when you can begin specific activities.
- ✗ Do not do any repetitive activities. You can sign your name but you should not write a letter.
- ✗ Do not drive.

If you do not follow this advice you risk damaging the repaired tendon(s).

## Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about the advice given on removal of your splint, please contact the **hand therapy department** on **020 7188 4172 or 020 7188 4174**, **Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 4:30pm.**

### Pharmacy medicines helpline

For information about any medicines that you have been prescribed at Guy's and St Thomas' hospitals, you can speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline.

**t:** 020 7188 8748 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

### 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](mailto: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 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](http://www.nhs.uk)

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