

Hand therapy department

Thumb flexor tendon 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. Repeat each exercise ____ times.

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 your thumb so that the tip just touches the table. Do not use your other hand.
- **Actively** move your thumb away from the palm to stretch the thumb web.
- Keep your hand on the table with your palm facing upwards. **Actively** straighten all your fingers so that your fingertips touch the table.
- **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**.
- ✓ 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 two weeks.

- ✓ Very carefully wash and dry your hand as instructed by your hand therapist.
- ✓ Massage your scar with a non-perfumed moisturising cream, for example E45, Nivea or aqueous cream.
- ✓ Talk to your hand therapist about when you can start specific activities.

Don't

- ✗ Do not straighten your thumb and wrist with the other hand (**no passive straightening**).
- ✗ 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 may sign your name but you must 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 after thumb flexor tendon repairs, 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: **t: 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 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

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t: 0848 143 4017 e: members@gstt.nhs.uk

w: www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk

Leaflet number: 1547/VER3

Date published: January 2013

Review date: January 2016