

Central slip injury – static immobilisation Your initial appointment

This leaflet explains more about returning to your everyday activities after your injury and/or surgery. If you have any further questions, please speak to a therapist caring for you.

The tendon(s) that you have had repaired allow you to straighten your finger(s). It is vital that you follow these instructions so that your hand can heal and work as well as possible.

Splint

A thermoplastic (a type of plastic that can be heat moulded to perfectly fit your hand) splint has been made for you to wear to protect your hand after surgery. This must be **worn at all times for the next six weeks**.

It is vital that you **do not** get the splint hot or wet. **Do not** try to alter your splint in any way. **Do not** take your splint off for any reason (including when sleeping and bathing).

Looking after your wound

On your first visit, the therapist will remove the bulky dressing that was applied after surgery. The wound will be left with minimal or no dressings to aid healing. The stitches will be removed either by a nurse or your therapist 10–14 days after surgery. You must not get your wound wet.

Will there be swelling?

Swelling (oedema) is the body's normal response to injury. It is important to minimise this by raising your hand as much as possible above the level of your heart.

Will I be in pain?

You may experience some pain following surgery and may be prescribed painkillers. Please take them as advised when you feel pain.

Can I use my hand?

You may use your hand for very light activities while keeping your splint on, such as getting dressed, doing zips and buttons, tying shoe laces and brushing your hair. You are not allowed to drive until eight weeks after your surgery.

Will I need to do any specific exercises?

Yes. It is important to exercise your joints gently to prevent stiffness. To ensure you achieve the right balance between exercising and healing, exercise only as instructed by your therapist.

1. As pictured below, using your unaffected hand block under the top crease of your affected finger. Gently bend the top joint and straighten.



2. Bend all of your knuckles keeping the top joints straight. These exercises should be done _____ times, every _____ during the day. You should hold each position for _____ seconds.



Remember that it is the quality of the exercises that counts rather than the quantity.

What should I do if I have a problem at home?

Please contact the hand therapy department (contact details below) or go to your local Accident & Emergency (A&E) department if:

- you have increased pain, burning pain or pain greater than the previous day
- if you are exercising and feel a 'pop' sensation and the finger is no longer able to straighten.

Will I have a follow-up appointment?

You will be given follow-up appointments to see the hand therapist at regular intervals following your surgery. You will also be given an appointment to see the clinical specialist six weeks after your surgery to check your progress.

Further information

Your therapist is: _____

You can contact the hand therapy department on 020 7188 4174 or 4172.

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 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

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