



Mallet Finger Rehabilitation

Hand Therapy Patient Information

The tendon that straightens the end of your finger has been damaged.

The treatment for mallet finger is to wear a splint which keeps the tip of the finger straight, allowing your body to lay down new scar tissue to heal the damaged tendon.

You must keep this splint on **continuously, day and night, for a minimum of 6 weeks**. Your therapist will tell you if you need to wear it for longer than this, and when and how to remove this. Contact your therapist if the splint is uncomfortable.

If the splint is removed and the finger is allowed to droop during this time, the newly formed scar tissue may break or stretch. This may affect whether the tendon heals at all, or you may not be able to straighten the tip of the finger.

Do not use your hand for tasks that involve heavy or repetitive gripping (e.g. some cleaning tasks, ironing, DIY, gardening tasks) as the tip of the finger may bend in the splint.

Removal of the Splint

You will need to remove the splint daily to wash your finger so that the skin does not become too dirty or wet in the splint. You need to keep the tip of the finger flat at all times.

1. With your finger flat on the table, slide the splint off.
2. Wash around the finger with a cloth and dry thoroughly.

3. Use the other hand to lift the tip of the finger back onto the splint. **Do not let the tip droop at any time.**

Your therapist will show you how to do this.

You may need help from another person to wash your splint whilst you keep your finger flat on a table. The splint should be washed in cold, soapy water and dried thoroughly.

If you are struggling to remove the splint to wash your finger without bending the tip, please let your therapist know.

Keep all uninvolved fingers and joints moving. You can continue to use the hand for light activities but avoid any heavy or repetitive gripping activities that may encourage the tip to bend within the splint.

Make sure that you are able to bend and straighten the middle joint of the injured finger fully.

Contact your therapist or your GP if the finger becomes **red, hot, swollen, purple, cold** or **excessively painful**.

Rehabilitation stage 1

Only progress to this stage of your rehabilitation once your therapist has re-assessed your finger and deems it appropriate for you to progress.

The splint should still be worn all the time. Continue to keep your uninjured fingers moving.

Remove the splint to carry out the following exercises **6 – 8 times a day**:

- Holding the middle joint of the finger still, gently bend the tip of the finger down to one third of its full range, then straighten the tip.
- Repeat this exercise (x5) then replace the splint.
- **If, at any time, the tip droops and will not straighten, replace the splint, contact your therapist, and stop the exercises.**

Rehabilitation stage 2 – Start Date:

If you do not experience any problems, repeat the exercises as above, only increase the bend to two thirds of full range.

If at any time the tip droops and will not straighten, replace the splint, contact your therapist, and stop the exercises.

Rehabilitation stage 3 – To commence only when instructed by a therapist.

At this stage you can remove the splint during the daytime.

Continue to wear the splint at night and in vulnerable situations for a further 2 weeks.

In addition to the previous exercises, bend the tip and middle joints of your fingers into a hook and then straighten (x10). This will help you regain your full range of movement.

Avoid heavy gripping or sports activities for a further month. Your therapist will advise you on specific activities.

**If you have any problems in the future, please contact your physiotherapist.
Contact details are below.**

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