



HAND to ELBOW
— *Specialist Care* —

Flexor Tendon Repair

Hand Therapy Patient Information

You have had a tendon/s repaired in your hand/forearm. The repair is **very weak** at the moment; therefore, a splint has been made to protect it and to prevent you from using your hand. You **must wear the splint all the time**.

You will be taught the exercises in this booklet to complete **hourly** to move your tendon safely and help prevent it from 'sticking down'.

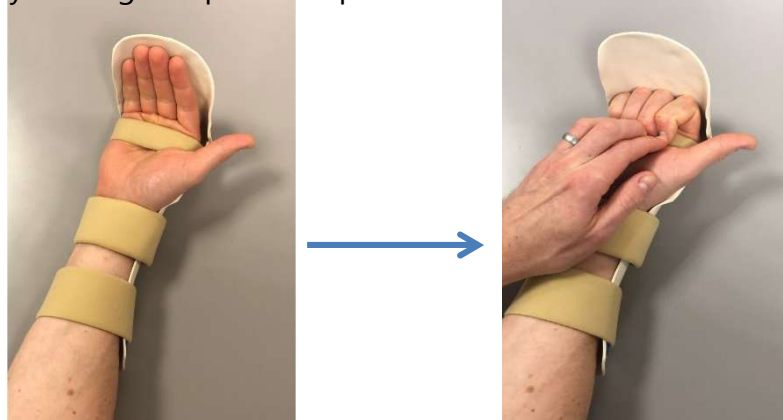
Rehabilitation (0-3 Weeks)

- When at rest, keep your hand raised to help reduce swelling.
- **Do not** remove your splint, get it wet or place it on anything hot.
- Whilst wearing the splint you should regularly check your skin condition and ensure the splint is fitting comfortably. If you have an issue, contact your physiotherapist.
- **Do not** use your hand for anything other than the exercises you are taught.
- Once your stitches have been removed (approx. 10-14 days post-op) or have begun to dissolve (absorbable), you can begin scar massage. Your therapist will teach you how to do this.
- If you have had a tendon repair that includes a stitch through your nail (see picture below), the stitch should **not be removed for 6 weeks**.



Exercises

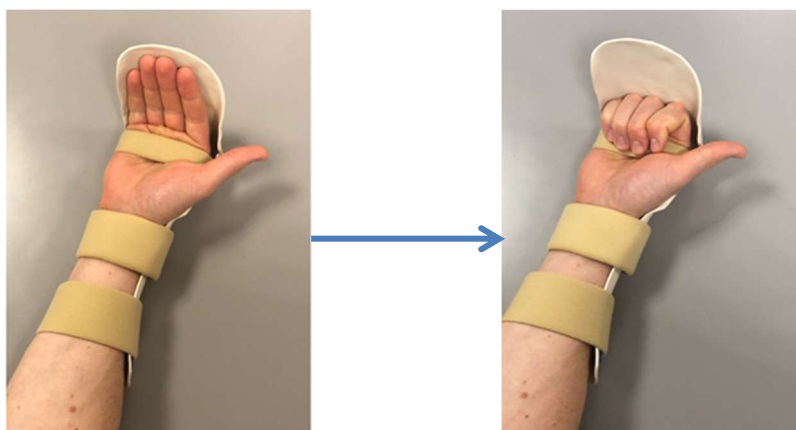
1. **Use your uninjured hand** to take your fingers from the splint and push them into the palm of your hand, until they touch the velcro strap. Then let go and straighten all your fingers up to the splint without assistance. Do this 10 times.



2. **Use your uninjured hand** to take your fingers from the splint and push all your fingers down into the palm, until they touch the velcro strap. Then take your other hand away and count to 5 seconds whilst keeping your fingers bent. Then slowly straighten all your fingers back to the splint. Do this 5 times.



3. Once you have completed the above first two exercises, slowly and gently bend your fingers to the strap of the splint and straighten them without any help. Repeat this 3 times.

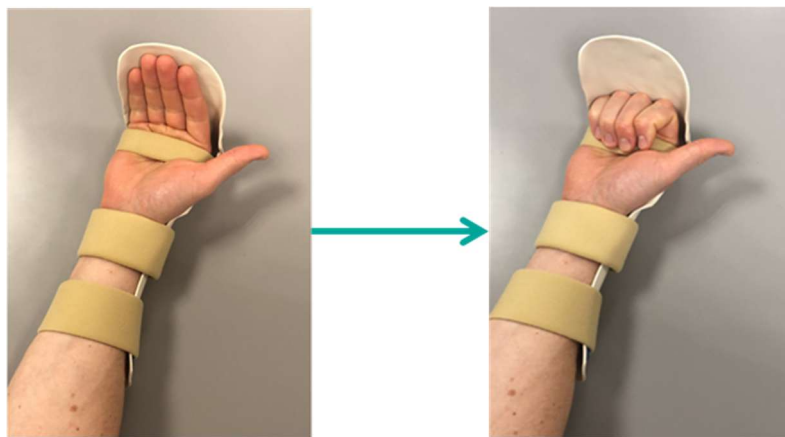


Rehabilitation (3-6 Weeks)

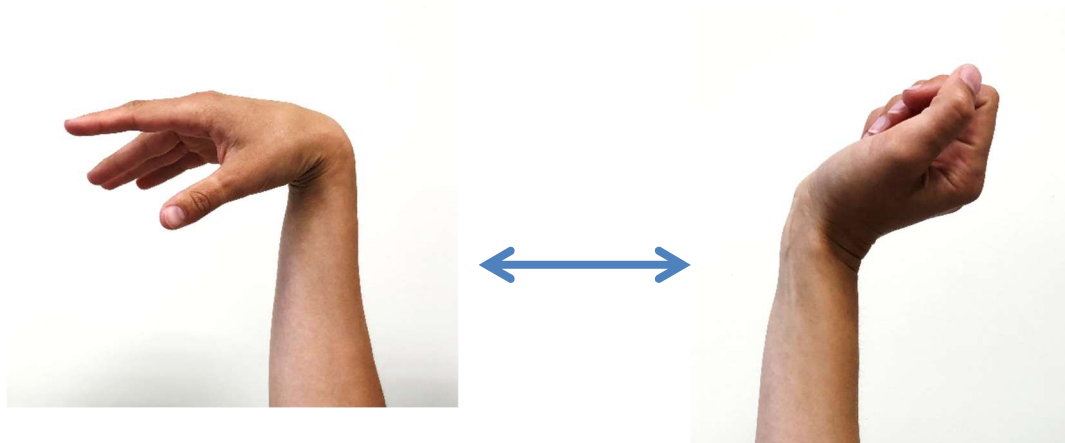
- Continue to wear your splint **all of the time**, except for the following exercises.
- Complete exercises 1 and 2 (from 0-3 weeks) before doing these exercises.
- You can now start to gently move your fingers by themselves within the confines of the splint.

Exercises

1. Slowly and gently bend your fingers into your palm to touch the strap of the splint, and then slowly straighten them back to the splint without any help. This is the last exercise from Weeks 0-3. You must now repeat this 5 times.



2. **Only if instructed by your therapist**, rest your elbow on the table and carefully remove the splint. With a **relaxed thumb and hand**, bend your wrist forwards letting your fingers extend then bend it backwards letting your fingers curl. Repeat this 5 times.



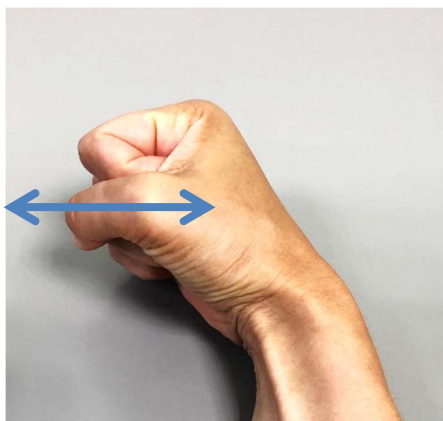
Rehabilitation (6-8 Weeks)

Your splint will be gradually straightened. You can wear the splint less during the day, but wear it any time you feel your hand may be '**at risk**' e.g. in crowds or when sleeping.

- Continue all your exercises, scar massage and use your hand within the limits set by your Hand Therapist.
- **Do not** pinch, push hard against any objects (e.g. pushing doors open, getting out of the bath and pushing out of a chair) or lift anything heavier than a bag of sugar.
- You cannot **drive** yet.

Exercises

1. Make a fist, try to make sure your thumb is wrapped around your fingers, hold them there and bend your wrist forwards and backwards. **Do not** force your wrist backwards.



Rehabilitation (8-10 weeks)

- Your tendon is getting a **little** stronger now.
- Your Hand Therapist will teach you exercises to help build strength and increase the movement in your fingers.
- Continue your scar massage and all your exercises.
- You can consider **driving** (ensure you have appropriate movement and strength to grip and feel comfortable with your own decision that you are capable of driving safely).
- You can start doing light work e.g. writing, dusting or using a keyboard.
- **Do not** play contact sports, lift anything heavier than 3kg, complete lots of repetitive work e.g. writing for long periods.

Rehabilitation (10-12 weeks)

Your tendon is getting stronger. Your hand and arm will be weak due to lack of use. Your therapist will teach you exercises to help get the strength back.

Rehabilitation (12+ weeks)

Check with your therapist before returning to heavy manual work, contact sports or sports that require prolonged periods of holding e.g. bouldering/climbing. It is **very important** to discuss any problems or concerns you have with your therapist.

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

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