

Flexor Tendon Repair, a guide to your therapy

Information and advice for
patients and carers



This leaflet is designed to help you understand your injury, the importance of a splint and the type of exercises you need to do to make sure your finger gets better.

What is a flexor tendon?

It is a long thin structure which attaches the muscle in your arm to your fingers and allows them to bend. You have two different ones: Flexor Digitorum Profundus (FDP) and Flexor Digitorum Superficialis (FDS). You have had surgery to repair this tendon(s).

When does my therapy (occupational therapy and physiotherapy) start?

You will meet your Therapist 3 to 5 days after your operation and you will be given a splint to wear and some exercises to do

What is a Splint, and why do I need to wear it?



The splint is used to protect your hand while the tendon is healing and reduce the risk of the repaired tendon(s) snapping. It is usually made of plastic which is shaped to fit your hand.

If your splint causes any rubbing, redness or pain contact your therapist immediately

DO	DON'T
<p>Do wear the splint all the time for 6 weeks. (This will give the tendons time to heal)</p>	<p>Don't remove the splint</p>
<p>Do your exercises that your therapist has taught you</p>	<p>Don't use your hand for any other activities at all (this may damage the tendon repair and you may need another operation)</p>
<p>Do cover the splint with a bag when in the shower or bath</p>	<p>Don't get the splint wet</p>
<p>Do keep away from direct heat sources (this can melt the splint)</p>	<p>Don't drive for 8 to 10 weeks after your operation</p>
<p>Do elevate your hand above your chest (rest it up on pillows when asleep or sitting down)</p>	<p>Don't let your arm dangle at your side</p>
<p>Do move your elbow and shoulder often (or they will get stiff)</p>	<p>Don't play contact sports or lift anything heavy for 12 weeks (this may damage the tendon)</p>

How long will my tendon take to heal?

It will take 12 weeks until fully healed

How often will I have to attend hospital?

Every week for 6 weeks at the Leeds General Infirmary on ward L46. After this your therapist will tell you about any more therapy you need and will book this for you.

When can I return to work?

This will depend on your type of job and its physical requirements. Your therapist can advise you on this.

What is scar massage and why?

You will be told by your therapist when you can start to massage your scar and you will be taught how to do this - you will need to massage your scar 3 to 4 times daily with a non-perfumed cream.

Home exercise programme - Your exercises explained

You should do these exercises every waking hour.



Fingers extended to the splint

This is the starting position for all your exercises

Make sure you can touch the splint with your finger nails



Passive flexion

Use your other hand to bend each finger individually in towards your palm. Hold this position for 5 seconds and then slowly straighten your fingers back to the splint using your injured hand only. Repeat 5 times



Flex to 25%

Make a 3 finger wall with your other hand. Place this on your palm. Using your injured hand, slowly bend from the finger tips to touch the wall. Hold for 5 seconds and then slowly straighten to the splint. Repeat 5 times.



FDS glide

Make a 3 finger wall with your other hand. Place this on your palm. Using you injured hand, slowly bend from your middle knuckles to touch the wall. Hold for 5 seconds and then slowly straighten to the splint. Repeat 5 times



Tenodesis

Remove the palm strap from your splint. Slowly bend the wrist forwards as far as you can keeping your fingers relaxed and then slowly bring your hand back to the splint.

Repeat 5 times.



Blocked extension

Use your other hand to bend your injured finger at the knuckle joint. Keep it in this position and then straighten the rest of your finger.

Repeat 5 times

What should I do if I am concerned about my tendon repair?

If you feel a pop or a snap or you stop being able to bend your finger you must ring us immediately. If this happens outside of our normal working hours then you should attend Accident and Emergency/minor injuries. If you feel unwell or are concerned that your wounds are infected, you should also contact Accident and Emergency. It is important that you do not straighten your fingers with force as your tendon is not strong enough to withstand the pressure



Therapy Department Contact Details

Telephone (0113) 392 2720 Monday-Friday 8am - 3.45pm

The Hand Unit - L46, D floor Clarendon Wing

Leeds General Infirmary

For any problems out of these hours, contact your local Accident & Emergency Department. If you cannot make an appointment, please ring in advance to allow another to be rearranged. Missing appointments can harm your recovery.

What did you think of your care? Visit bit.ly/nhsleedsfft
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© The Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust • 3rd edition (Ver 1)
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Produced by: Medical Illustration Services • MID code: 20240306_013/RC

LN004659
Publication date
03/2024
Review date
03/2027