



REHABILITATION

Mallet Injuries

Thumb extensor zone I

Finger extensor zone I and II

You have injured the tendon that straightens the end joint of your finger or thumb. These injuries are treated using a splint.

Splint

A mallet splint is used to hold the tip of the digit slightly hyperextended:



PIPJ

Points to note:

- The splint should allow the Proximal Interphalangeal Joint to bend (marked as PIPJ in picture above). You should bend this joint frequently to stop it becoming stiff.
- The splint should keep the end joint (DIPJ) straight, you should not bend this at all while the tendon is healing.
- You need to remove the tape and slide the splint carefully off the finger each day to allow the skin to dry out. Don't let the end joint bend, keep it flat on a table top all the time while the splint is off.
- Various sizes of splint are available but if none fit you snugly you will need to be referred to the hand therapy department who will make you a splint to fit.

Rehabilitation regimes

1. Without bony injury

0 - 8 weeks after injury – splint full time

8 – 10 weeks after injury – splint at night. Start gently moving the end joint out of the splint during the day. Do not include that finger in any heavy lifting.

10 – 12 weeks after injury – stop using the splint. Gradually build back up to normal activities. Do not force the end joint to bend.

If the finger tip starts to drop down again reapply the splint full time for a further 2 weeks.

2. With bony injury – good alignment in splint

0 - 6 weeks after injury – splint full time

6 – 8 weeks after injury – splint at night. Start gently moving the end joint out of the splint during the day. Do not include that finger in any heavy lifting.

8 - 10 weeks after injury – stop using the splint. Gradually build back up to normal activities.

Do not force the end joint to bend.

If the finger tip starts to drop down again reapply the splint full time for a further 2 weeks.

3. With bony injury – if K wire treatment has been used

0 - 4 weeks K wires in place with padded splint.

4- 6 weeks K wire removed, use mallet splint for support full time. Further rehabilitation as for bony injury 2. (previous).

Massage the pin sites when they are healed for a few minutes each day using unscented moisturising cream.

4. Other surgery

Your surgeon will let you and the hand therapists know of any specific requirements.