



REHABILITATION

PIPJ Replacement

You have had one of the joints in your finger(s) replaced.

This is a big operation for your finger and you will need to work hard to get the best movement you can from your finger after this surgery.

Progress following this surgery varies from person to person and you must be guided by your therapist. These pages provide a guide for an average rehabilitation regime for a single finger.

Week 0 – 4 after surgery

You will have 3 different splints made to fit you by your hand therapist during the first week following your operation. These will replace the dressings and splint put on in theatre.

Once your wound is healed you will also start scar massage and techniques to reduce the swelling of the finger

Gutter/Resting Splint - Splint 1

This protects the healing tissues on the back of your finger. Pay close attention to how the splint is applied, attention to detail makes all the difference to the final results.

You will wear this splint all the time that you are not using your exercise splints for the first 4 weeks.



Do 5-10 repetitions of each of the following exercises every hour during the day.

You should wear the resting splint (splint 1) all the rest of the time, between exercise sessions.

Exercising the end joint of the finger – Splint 2

Splint 2 is the first of your exercise splints.

Carefully remove splint 1 and place splint 2 on the front of your finger, as shown. Be sure you place the splint so that you can see the skin crease of the end joint.

Hold down the middle joint into the splint with your uninjured hand, as shown. Once the finger is snug against the splint try to bend and straighten the top joint of the operated finger.



Exercising both finger joints – Splint 3

Splint 3 is the second of your exercise splints.

Carefully remove splint 2, Place splint 3 on the front of the finger, at its base, as shown. Secure the strap and hold the splint, the strap and the base of the finger with your other hand (not shown in the pictures). Carefully bend the finger to the angle of the splint, aiming to lightly touch the splint with your finger tip. Then straighten the finger, as shown.

This splint will be altered by your therapist over the first 6 weeks to allow more movement of the finger.

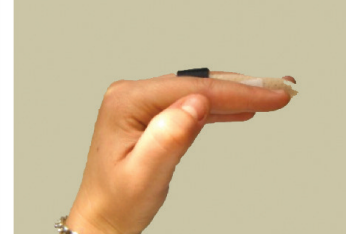




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Exercising the base joint of the finger

Carefully remove splint 3 and put splint 1 back on. Now aim to keep your fingers straight yet bend at the base so as to make a 'table top', as shown.



Weeks 5-6 after surgery

You may now begin to remove your splint for periods of exercise and light activities during the day. Light activities include turning pages, eating, folding light laundry, tying a shoe, buttoning and typing. Ask your Hand Therapist when you may begin specific activities if you are in doubt to avoid over doing it and undoing all your hard work.

Do continue to wear your splint at night and when going out in crowded places e.g. on public transport, in the pub etc

Continue with your exercise regime as directed by your therapist, increasing your range of motion.

Weeks 7-12 after surgery

Most patients will not need their splints by this stage.

During this phase you will work on improving your range of motion, strengthening the hand and finger and continuing to reduce the swelling.

You should not do any contact sports (eg rugby) or heavy lifting until at least 12 weeks after your surgery.

DO'S

- Do keep your arm/hand elevated to minimise swelling, particularly soon after your surgery
- Do wear your splints as prescribed
- Do follow the therapist recommendations
- Do keep all your uninjured joints moving, including your shoulder and elbow
- Do massage your scar (once healed) with moisturiser as demonstrated by your therapist

DON'TS

- Don't leave your finger out of the splints until instructed to do so
- Don't force your finger to bend with your other hand
- Don't use your injured hand to grip objects tightly
- Don't drive until you have discussed this with your therapist