

Upper Limb Unit - Hand Therapy



Closed central slip injury

You have recently damaged your extensor tendon. Your extensor tendon straightens the middle joint of your finger. Damaging your extensor tendon is known as central slip.

Central slip should heal on its own without surgery.

You need to follow the treatment to ensure the best recovery. Or the delicate balance of the tendon may lead to a deformity of the finger and a bent finger you cannot straighten.

Treatment

Splinting

You need to wear a splint for a total of 6 weeks after your injury.

- We will give you a static splint to wear for the first 3 weeks
- After 3 weeks, you will be provided with a spring Capener splint to wear for another 3 weeks.

This splint holds the finger straight and prevents you bending the affected joint. Bending the affected joint would re-damage the tendon.



Patient Information

Your splint should be worn all the time (24 hours a day). It can be removed to clean your finger after any wound has healed. But you should ensure the finger is supported in a straight position, like rested on a table whilst you clean it.

You may need more splints after 6 weeks. Your therapist will provide these.

Exercises

Whilst wearing your splint, it is important to keep the other finger joints moving.

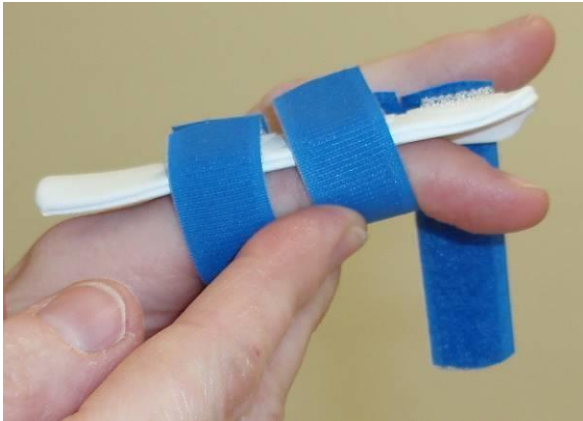
Keep the top joint still for 2 weeks. This allows the tendon to settle after the injury.

You will be shown how to bend the top joint 2 weeks after your injury. The following exercises should be completed with the affected finger every 1-2 hours during the day.



A. With your splint on bend the knuckle (1st finger) joint as far as possible and straighten.

Patient Information



B. After 2 weeks (when shown by your therapist), bend only the top joint as far as possible.

Remember to move your other finger joints.

After 3 weeks, you can start bending the middle joint. Use the spring Capener splint as advised by your therapist. You should wear a splint for a total of 6 weeks.

Your therapist may give you exercises to help you regain the maximum range of movement of the finger and to prevent any deformity.

How long will I be off work and when can I drive?

You will be able to do most everyday activities with your splint or strapping on.

You may be able to work with your splint on. But this will depend on your job. Ask your doctor for more advice.

It is your responsibility to ensure you are safe to drive with your splint on. You must inform your insurance company. You should be able to make a full pain free fist before attempting this.

You should not start any sporting activities. These may cause your splint to come off and cause more damage your finger.

Complications

Joint stiffness

This should improve with hand therapy.

Flexion contracture

A loss of full finger straightening. This is sometimes permanent.

Chronic swelling

The finger remains more thickened than before the injury.

More information

The Day Surgery Unit can be contacted on 024 7696 6861 / 024 7696 6868 (University Hospital), or on 01788 663264 (Hospital of St. Cross).

For more information, visit our Hand Service's website at www.tinyurl.com/uhcwhand, or contact:

- Hand Therapy at University Hospital Coventry & Warwickshire on 024 7696 6016
- Hand Therapy at Hospital of St. Cross, Rugby on 01788 663 257
- Our specialist hand surgery nurse / hand-coordinator on 024 7696 5072

Images taken within the Trust.

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format, please contact 024 7696 6861 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke-free policy.

Did we get it right?

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