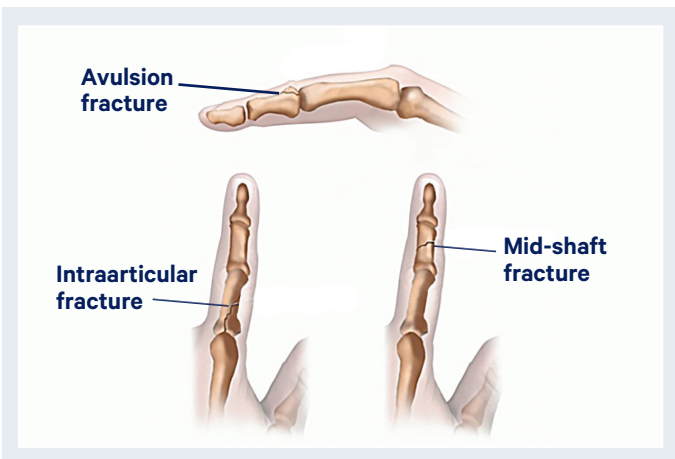


Finger Fractures in the Hand

WHAT IS A FINGER FRACTURE AND HOW DOES IT HAPPEN?

A finger fracture is a crack or break in one or more of the bones in a finger. The break may be just a bend or small crack in the bone or the bone may break into pieces. The fingers are made up of bones called phalanges. If you break one of these bones you will have a phalangeal fracture. There are different types of phalangeal fractures.



These fractures can happen from hitting or being hit by a hard object, getting a finger slammed in a door or falling onto the hand. Common signs of a broken finger may include a snapping or popping sound at the time of the injury, pain, swelling or bruising that happens right after the injury, pain when the injured area is touched, a change in the shape of the finger. Very occasionally parts of the injured finger may feel numb or cold.

HOW ARE FINGER FRACTURES TREATED?

Hand Therapy

You will first have an x-ray to check if a bone is broken. If your fracture is considered to be simple and stable, it is common for the injured finger to have strapping, a splint or a plaster cast to hold it in the correct position so the bone can heal properly. Your hand therapy treatment may include

- Splinting to hold and protect your finger.
- Management of swelling.
- Exercises to restore movement and strength to your hand.

Surgery

If the break is complicated or severe, surgery may be needed to put the bones back in the correct position. Your hand therapist can tell you more about this.



WHAT CAN I EXPECT FROM MY REHABILITATION?

Your rehabilitation may begin with buddy strapping or a splint that is needed for 3-6 weeks from the day of your injury. During this time you should only use your hand for light activity and light gripping. Your hand therapist will give you exercises for movement and strength, and advice about returning to your usual daily activity. Contact sports should be avoided until at least 12 weeks after injury or until your hand therapist or hand surgeon advises you to return. If you return too soon to demanding or heavier activities you may worsen your injury. Your hand therapist will be able to give you more advice on this.

Do:

- Wear your splint.
- Keep your hand elevated if there is swelling in your finger, this will help it heal.
- Follow your hand therapists' instructions about exercises and using your hand.
- Avoid daily tasks that involve any strong gripping or lifting.

Do Not:

- Remove your splint without guidance from your hand therapist.

WHAT SHOULD I LOOK OUT FOR?

- Tell your hand therapist if your splint or plaster is too tight or uncomfortable, your splint becomes loose or if it is rubbing on your skin or if you have any numbness or pins and needles.
- If your finger becomes red, swollen and painful you should stop your exercises and book an appointment to see your hand therapist. Elevation and ice may be helpful to reduce swelling.
- If things are getting worse book an appointment to see your hand therapist.



Merivale Hand Clinic

PHYSIOTHERAPISTS - OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS

Finger Fractures in the Hand

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF I DO NOT HAVE TREATMENT?

If your bone does not heal properly you may not be able to use your finger normally. Your finger may become stiff and painful with activity. It is important to treat this injury early.

CONTACT DETAILS AND REFERENCES

Your hand therapist is _____

Merivale Hand Clinic (03) 3559775

http://www.summitmedicalgroup.com/library/adult_health/sma_finger_fractures/ (PIC)

<http://www.horsefairsurgery.co.uk/Physio/110707phalangeal.pdf>

<http://www.melbournehandsurgery.com/fractures/36-hands/fractures/189-proximal-phalangeal-fractures>

http://practicalplasticsurgery.org/docs/Practical_30.pdf