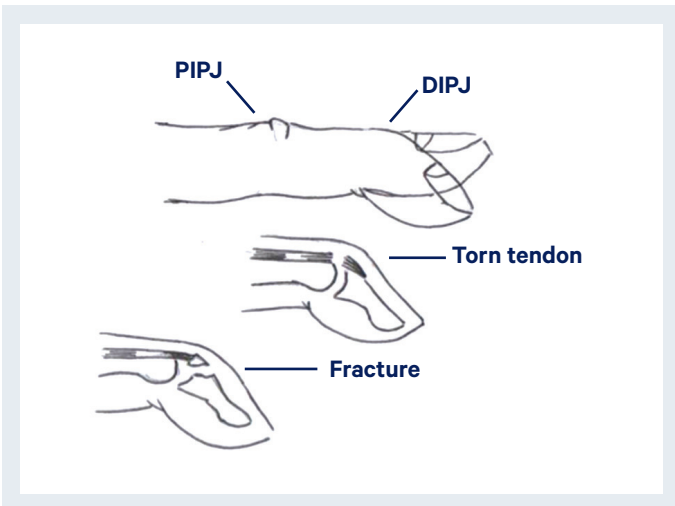


Mallet Finger Injury

WHAT IS A MALLET FINGER INJURY AND HOW DOES IT HAPPEN?

A mallet finger injury is when the end of your finger is bent and cannot straighten. This is caused by an injury to the tendon that straightens the end of your finger. Less often, the cause is a break at the bottom of the bone where the tendon attaches. To look for a break an x-ray of your injured finger is taken.



HOW IS MALLET FINGER INJURY TREATED?

Hand Therapy

Your hand therapist will make you a splint that will hold your finger slightly straighter than the usual position. It's important to look after your finger and change your splints to achieve a good result. If the finger droops or drops at any time you may need to start the splinting again from the beginning.

The aim of treatment is to get your fingertip to heal as straight as possible, even with splinting there is a chance that your finger will not be as straight as before but keeping it in the splint gives it the best chance. This can take 6-8 weeks or longer.

Your hand therapy treatment may include

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

Surgery

Surgery may be needed if your mallet injury involves a large break in your bone or if the tendon does not heal by itself. It is important to be aware that surgery does not always give good results. Your surgeon will tell you which operation is recommended for your finger. A splint may be needed after your operation.



WHAT CAN I EXPECT FROM MY REHABILITATION?

The end of your finger must be held straight in a splint for 6-8 weeks to help the bone or tendon heal. The splint keeps the injured joint straight but allows the joints below to move which will stop them stiffening up.

You will be made an appointment about one week after your injury. This is to check that the splint still fits as your swelling starts to come down and that you are managing to look after your finger in the splint.

Once you have finished your 6-8 weeks of splinting, your hand therapist will show you how to slowly come out of the splint and begin exercises to make the tendon strong and regain your movement.

SPLINT CARE INSTRUCTIONS

The splint needs to be taken off to clean your finger once or twice a day. Set yourself up with a cleaning bowl and facecloth as well as fresh tape before you take off your splint to clean your finger. **When you take off the splint, your finger tip must be supported on a flat surface or the pad of your thumb.**

Your hand therapist will show you how to do this.

We suggest you remove your splint for cleaning after your shower.

Do

- Wear your splint all the time and be careful when you take off your splint to clean your finger.
- Follow your hand therapists' instructions about exercises and using your hand.
- Avoid daily tasks that involve any strong gripping or lifting.
- Book an appointment to see your hand therapist if you notice your skin looks irritated, wet or white, your finger goes blue or numb, if the splint becomes very loose or if you lose your splint.



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Do Not

- Test the healing of the tendon by bending the finger tip.
- Wear any rings on this hand until the injured finger has healed. This will help avoid swelling and problems with the blood supply to the finger.

WHAT SHOULD I LOOK OUT FOR?

- Look out for any problems with movement of the finger joints below the splint. If you notice that your middle joint is bending backwards when you straighten your finger contact your hand therapist for a follow up appointment.
- If your finger becomes red, swollen and painful you should stop your exercises and book an appointment to see your hand therapist.
- If things are getting worse book an appointment to see your hand therapist.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF I DO NOT HAVE TREATMENT?

If your mallet finger injury is not treated the bone or tendon will not be able to heal together which could lead to the finger being permanently bent. An untreated mallet finger can affect other joints in the finger, and you may develop a swan neck deformity which can make it hard to bend the finger.

CONTACT DETAILS AND REFERENCES

Your hand therapist is _____
Merivale Hand Clinic (03) 3559775

<http://www.houstonmethodist.org/orthopedics/where-does-it-hurt/hand/mallet-finger-injuries/>

https://www.stgeorges.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/PLA_MFL_01.pdf

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