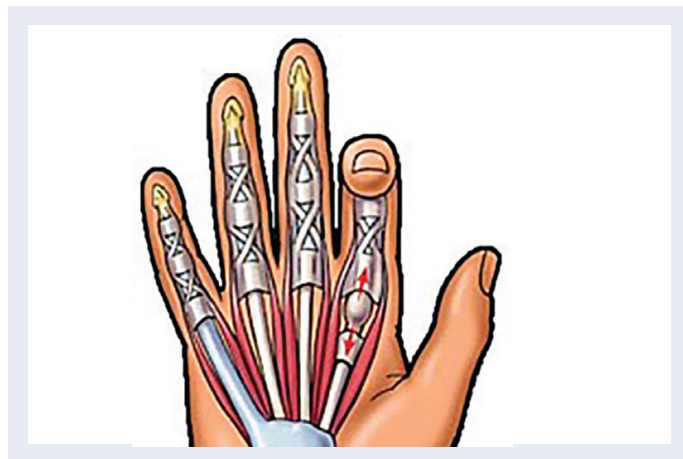


Trigger Finger Injury

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

Trigger finger is a condition that causes the finger to catch or lock after it has been bent. In your hand there are bands of tissues called tendons that connect the muscles in your arm to your finger bones. Together the muscles and tendons bend and straighten your fingers. The tendons normally move freely through a protective covering called a tendon sheath. If a part of the tendon becomes swollen it may catch or become stuck at the opening of the sheath when bending and straightening the finger. This can make the finger click or pop as it straightens and is sometimes painful. It is often worse in the morning or when doing activity that involves lots of gripping.



HOW IS TRIGGER FINGER TREATED?

Hand Therapy

Your hand therapist will assess your finger and treatment may include

- A splint to wear for 3-6 weeks which allows the tendon to move but not trigger.
- Exercises to help the tendon move without triggering.
- Ice or heat to the area to help reduce swelling and pain.
- Ways to change activities that involve a lot of gripping or gripping for long periods of time.

Corticosteroid Injection

If symptoms don't settle your hand therapist may refer you for a corticosteroid injection. This puts a strong anti-inflammatory medicine into the tendon sheath to help reduce the swelling and pain. Your hand therapist can refer you to a doctor for a corticosteroid injection and will see you after the procedure to continue your rehabilitation.

Surgery

Surgery is considered when the problem does not get better or if you have severe locking of the finger (you are unable to straighten it at all). The surgeon makes a small incision in your palm under a local anaesthetic. The tendon sheath is released to allow the tendon to glide freely.

WHAT CAN I EXPECT FROM MY REHABILITATION?

You should wear your splint for 4-6 weeks and avoid everyday tasks that you know make your symptoms worse.

Your hand therapist will show you exercises to keep the joints in the finger moving and safely glide the tendon.

If the problem improves you will begin to spend less time in your splint. At first you can take your splint off when you are resting, then gradually start to remove it when doing lighter tasks around the house. And lastly doing all your normal activities without your splint. This can take a further 6 weeks.

If you have had no change in your symptoms your hand therapist can refer you for an ultrasound scan to look at the tendons, or for a corticosteroid injection or surgical opinion.

If you do have an injection or surgery you can expect to use your hand normally again within 6 weeks. Your hand therapist will guide your rehabilitation after an injection or surgery.

Do

- Remember to wear your splint.
- Avoid or modify the activities that bring on your symptoms.
- Rest your hand between activities, especially if you are doing anything heavy or repetitive.

Do Not

- Do lots of forceful gripping at one time.



Merivale Hand Clinic

PHYSIOTHERAPISTS - OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS

Trigger Finger Injury

WHAT SHOULD I LOOK OUT FOR?

- Look for activity that causes pain or swelling in your hand, try to avoid it and tell your hand therapist.
- If your splint is uncomfortable book an appointment to see your hand therapist.
- If your symptoms are getting worse book an appointment to see your hand therapist.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF I DO NOT HAVE TREATMENT?

In most cases the pain and swelling will get worse with time and become much harder to treat. This will affect you in everyday tasks. Your finger could become permanently stuck in a bent position. Treatment is more effective if started within the first few months of noticing symptoms.

CONTACT DETAILS AND REFERENCES

Your hand therapist is

Merivale Hand Clinic (03) 3559775

http://www.cks.nhs.uk/patient_information_leaflet/trigger_finger#

<http://www.eatonhand.com>