FLEXOR TENDON REPAIRS

General Rules:-

1. Your splint must be worn continuously for the first 4 weeks after the operation. **DO NOT TAKE IT OFF FOR ANY REASON.**
   As your treatment progresses, your doctor will tell you when you may remove it.

2. Keep your hand up to prevent swelling.

3. Keep the dressing clean and dry. The uncovered parts of your hand can be cleaned with a damp face cloth, and a plastic packet can be used to cover your hand and splint while washing the rest of your body if you take a shower or have a bath. A little powder can be sprinkled between the skin and the splint if perspiration is a problem.

4. You will be taught exercises for your hand and arm before you leave hospital, and given a pamphlet to remind you of these exercises. (Some of these exercises are included on this information sheet) Your hand will be checked once a week as an out patient by the physiotherapist or occupational therapist until your next doctor’s appointment, unless distance is a problem. This is to check that you are managing your exercises well, and that swelling and stiffness of your fingers does not become a problem.

5. Your exercises are to be done at least **5 times per day, every day** without fail. i.e. before breakfast, mid morning, at lunch time, mid afternoon and at night. If you do not do your exercises regularly, you may not regain good use of your hand. Remember – it is your hand, and you must be responsible about your treatment.

6. As the weeks progress your therapist will give you more exercises to do.

7. It is important to keep all your uninjured joints moving so that they do not get stiff while your flexor tendon repair is healing.

8. If you have any problems or questions, please do not hesitate to contact the physiotherapy or occupational therapy outpatient department for help.

   Telephone numbers are :-
   
   Physiotherapy  033-8973201
   Occupational Therapy  033-8973200

**THIS BOOKLET MUST BE RETURNED AT THE 12 WEEK CHECK-UP**
EXERCISES

The first 4 to 5 weeks:-

1. Straighten your fingers against the rubber band so that your nails touch the back of the splint. Hold for 2 counts, and then relax, letting the rubber band bend your fingers back to a curled position.

2. **PASSIVE MOVEMENT ONLY** for bending your fingers – i.e. use your **good hand** to bend the fingers of your injured hand. This will prevent breaking your repaired tendon.
   - Do 5 passive movements of the last joint of each finger. Hold for the count of 3 each time. (Bend and straighten as shown in fig. 1.)
   - Do 5 passive movements of the middle joint of each finger. Hold for the count of 3 each time. (Bend and straighten as shown in fig. 2.)
- Do 5 passive movements of the knuckle joint. Hold for the count of 3 each time. (Bend and straighten as shown in fig. 3)

- Bend the entire finger into the palm as shown in fig. 4.

- Bend the knuckle and gently straighten the middle joint as shown in fig. 5. Repeat 5 times.

- Bend the knuckle and middle joint and gently straighten the end joint, as shown in fig. 6. Repeat 5 times.
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4 to 6 Weeks Post- operatively

You may remove your splint for **exercise only**. Continue to wear it at night and in between exercise sessions.

Your exercises must still be done **5 times per day** (more if possible).

1. Continue with the passive movements 5 times daily – 5 repetitions to the end joint, 5 repetitions to the middle joint, and bending the whole finger into the palm 5 times.

2. Remove your splint for the following exercises:

   - Bend your wrist up and down 10 times with fingers relaxed.
   - Bend your wrist with your fingers bent, then gently straighten your wrist and fingers 10 times as in figs. 1A and 1B.
   - Make a fist and straighten your fingers 10 times. **DO NOT** force the fingers straight.
   - Make a fist and then straighten first the knuckle joint, then the middle and end joints 10 times, as in figs 2A, 2B and 2C **DO NOT** force the straightening.

**NOW PUT YOUR SPLINT BACK ON.**

**Remember** :- your splint is protecting your repaired tendon. **DO NOT** leave it off at any other time.
FLEXOR TENDON REPAIRS

6 Weeks Post-operatively.

You may now take your splint off and leave it off.

Exercises must still be done **5 times per day** – more if possible.

- Bend your wrist with your fingers bent, then straighten your wrist and fingers 12 times.

- Make a fist and straighten all fingers 12 times.

- Make a fist then straighten your knuckles, then your middle and end joints. Do this 12 times.

- With your good hand hold your finger just below the end joint. Bend and straighten the finger at the end joint only, 10 times, keeping the rest of the finger straight, as shown in fig. 3.

![FIGURE 3.](image)

- With your good hand hold your finger below the middle joint. Bend and straighten the finger at the middle joint only, 10 times, as shown in fig. 4.

![FIGURE 4.](image)

**PRECAUTION:** do not start resisted exercises, sports or heavy lifting until advised by your doctor or therapist.

At 8 Weeks Post-operatively:

- Start gentle strengthening using putty and a Ball or sponge. Light grasping and carrying is allowed. Your therapist will teach you exercises.

At 10 – 12 Weeks Post-operatively:

- You may return to full use of the hand, including sports.