



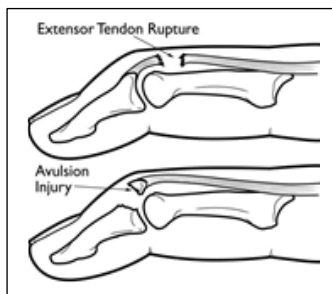
Mallet Injury:

Information factsheet

What is a mallet finger injury?

It occurs when the end joint of one of your fingers will not straighten by itself and droops. It can be pushed straight but it will not stay in that position on its own. There are two types of mallet injury:

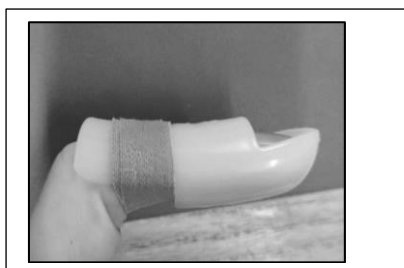
- Tendinous – caused by an injury to the tendon that straightens (extends) your finger.
- Bony – caused by an injury to the bone to which the tendon attaches.



A Mallet injury occurs when you stub the end of your finger or thumb. The tip of the finger or thumb no longer straightens. This is because the tendon has torn (tendon rupture) or pulled away a piece of bone (avulsion injury).

Treating mallet finger:

Your finger will be put in a plastic splint, which keeps it straight, with the end joint slightly bent upwards. The middle joint of the finger is left free so you can continue to move it to prevent any stiffness developing in that joint.



The splint is taped on and must be worn day and night for six to eight weeks to allow tendon or bone healing. The bone tends to heal by six weeks, but tendon healing may take up to eight weeks.

It is very important that the end of your finger does not bend during the time it is splinted because it may slow the healing and reduce the effectiveness of the treatment. The splint should only be removed for cleaning, taking care to ensure the end of your finger is supported.



How to keep your finger clean:

You must always keep your splinted finger clean and dry. If the skin inside the splint gets wet, it could lead to skin breakdown and become sore.

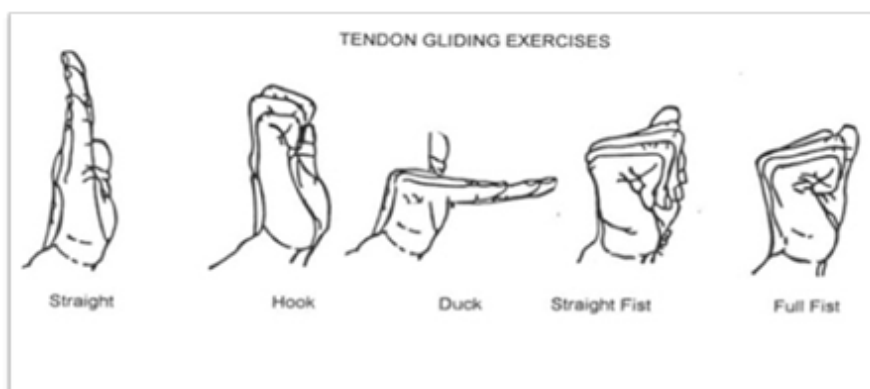
It is important to wash both your finger and the splint at least once a day, following these instructions:

1. Keep your finger flat on a table, cut the strapping, and slide the splint off your finger.
2. Wash and dry your finger and the splint using soap and water. Always keep the end joint straight by keeping your finger flat on the table. It may be easier if someone helps you to do this each day.
3. Slide the splint back over your fingertip, keeping your finger straight.
4. Replace the strapping – this should cover the middle of the splint but should not cover the middle joint of your finger.

Please refer to the video on the Whittington Health website (www.whittington.nhs.uk) 'Virtual Fracture Clinic' for an instructional video on how to apply the splint.

After Eight Weeks:

At Eight weeks you should be reviewed by a hand therapist. If the tendon has healed and you can actively extend the tip of your finger, your splint will be removed. We will tell you to start gentle exercises as below.



You can complete these five times a day, five-ten repetitions. Increase repetitions gradually.



What other advice should I follow?

Do:

- Start using your hand for light activities as advised by your hand therapist (for example: washing, dressing, eating, typing)
- Drive when you are safely able to control the car
- Use light resistance to help improve the bend of your finger, for example: squeezing a light sponge, light therapy putty or playdoh
- Wear the splint provided for protection at night, when going out and during heavier activities For the next 2-4 weeks. Heavier activities could include housework, gardening or manual work tasks

Don'ts:

- Do not passively bend the tip of your finger with your other hand until 10-12 weeks after the injury when the tendon is stronger
- Do not play any contact sports until 10-12 weeks after the injury

After Twelve weeks:

You can return to normal activities and contact sports. You may need to pace the increase in normal activity if you have pain. You can stop the use of the splint.

If you are concerned about your splint or finger during the first six weeks or have not received an appointment for splint removal, please contact Hand Therapy Clinic on: 0207 288 5660 to book an appointment.



Patient advice and liaison service (PALS)

If you have a compliment, complaint or concern please contact our PALS team on 020 7288 5551 or whh-tr.PALS@nhs.net

If you need a large print, audio or translated copy of this leaflet please email whh-tr.patient-information@nhs.net. We will try our best to meet your needs.

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Date published: 24/06/2022
Review date: 24/06/2024
Ref: EIM/OT/MalletInj/01

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