



Boutonniere

Deformity

Hand Therapy Patient Information

What is a Boutonniere Deformity and its symptoms?

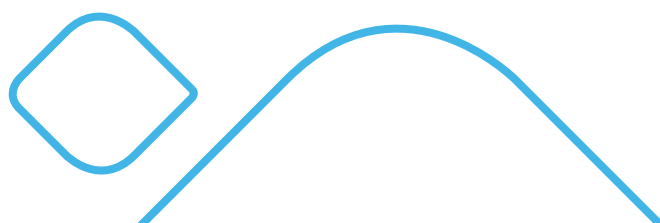
This happens when there is an injury to the tendon that straightens the middle joint of your finger. The middle joint of the finger is bent and you will be unable to fully straighten it voluntarily. The finger is often painful and swollen. You may also notice the end joint is bent upwards.

How is it treated?

A splint will have been made to support the middle joint in full extension. You must wear this **at all times** for the next **8 weeks**, and then **at night and times of risk** for **2-4 weeks**. You will be taught exercises to regularly move the unaffected joints.

General Advice

- Maintain good skin condition under the splint to avoid skin breakdown (see next section).
- When replacing or removing the splint (for hygiene only), **always keep the whole finger supported in a straight position**. If you do not, you will have to restart the recovery process from day one. **Never** bend your finger when the splint is off.
- Regularly raise your hand if it is swollen, particularly when at rest.
- Keep your other fingers moving to reduce stiffness.
- Do not use your hand for any heavy lifting or forceful movements.

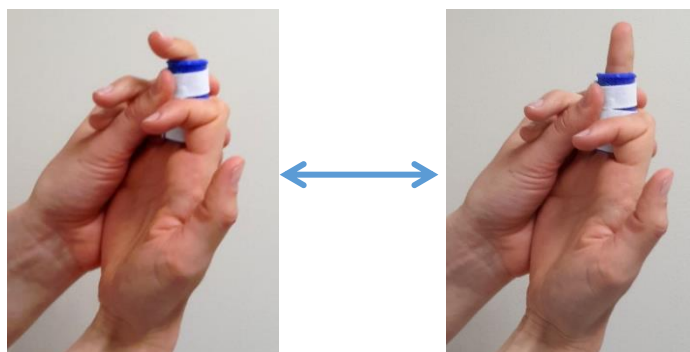


Taking care of your finger and the splint

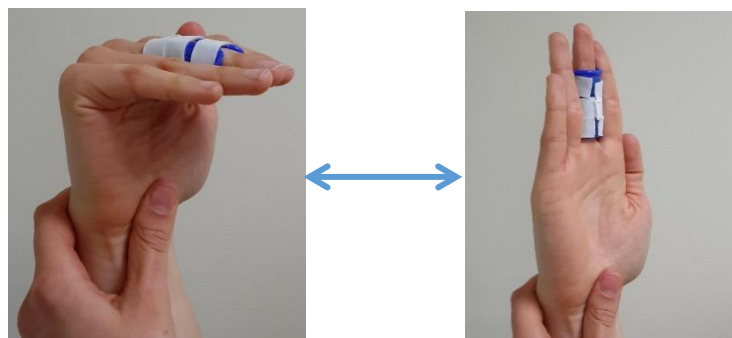
1. Before removing the splint, ensure you have a bowl of water and cloth to clean and dry the finger.
2. Place hand on a hard, flat surface.
3. Remove the splint slowly, ensuring the whole finger is supported in a straight position at all times. **N.B. This can be tricky to do with only one hand. It would be helpful to have someone to help you.**
4. Clean finger with warm soapy water, **taking care not to bend the finger**. The splint can also be washed in warm soapy water.
5. Dry the splint and finger and re-apply the splint, being sure to support the finger straight.
6. Whilst wearing the splint you should regularly check your skin condition and ensure the splint is fitting comfortably. If you have an issue, contact your hand therapist.

Exercising your finger

- Whilst in the splint, it is important to maintain the movement in the unaffected joints. We recommend bending and straightening the joints that are not splinted every hour.
 - Make sure your other fingers are not getting stiff by bending and straightening them fully around 20 times. You can use your other hand to help.
 - **Do not remove your splint**, unless advised by your hand therapist.
1. Hold the splinted joint to keep it straight. Slowly bend and straighten the end joint 20-30 times.



2. Keeping the fingers straight, slowly bend and straighten the first knuckle 10-20 times.



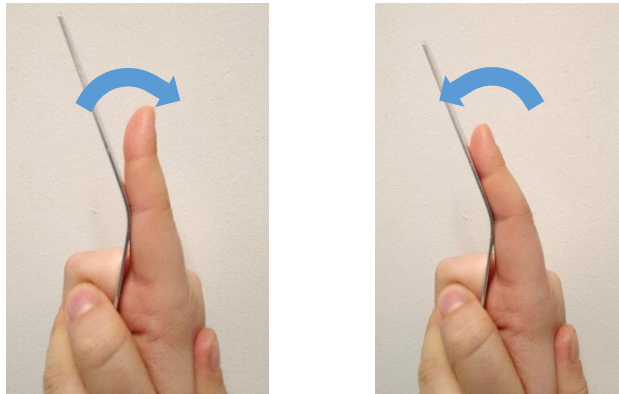
8+ Weeks

- You will be advised to begin gentle exercises to regain movement in the middle joint.
- This may include short periods of splinting during the day when using your hand and continuing to wear it at night for the next 2-4 weeks.
- Monitor the straightening of your finger. If you have an issue, contact your hand therapist.

Exercises

You should perform these exercises every 1-2 hours.

- Gently begin bending and straightening the middle joint within the limits of comfort. It may feel tight the more you bend the joint. Repeat this 10 times.
- Your hand therapist **may** teach you to do this exercise with a metal exercise bar (see below).



- This is done by placing the bar on the palm side of your hand with the bar bent in front of the middle joint crease. Hold it in place firmly with your other hand. Bend the finger towards the bar and then straighten it again. Do this 10 times.

If you have any problems, please contact your hand therapist. Contact details are below.

Hand Therapy

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01225 821241 | www.ruh.nhs.uk

Please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) if you require this leaflet in a different format, or would like to feedback your experience of the hospital.

Email ruh-tr.pals@nhs.net or telephone 01225 825656.