

Finger PIPJ

Replacement

Hand Therapy Patient Information

What is a finger Proximal Interphalangeal Joint (PIPJ) Replacement?

A PIPJ replacement is an operation to replace the middle joint of your finger with an artificial joint. This is usually done to relieve pain in the arthritic joint.

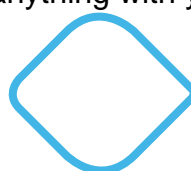


What will happen after the operation?

- Your finger will be in a dressing or cast for the first 1-2 weeks.
- You will then come back to clinic to have the dressing/plaster removed.
- You will be seen by the Hand Therapist who will show you how to begin exercising the finger and have a splint fitted, which you should wear for approximately 6-8 weeks after your operation.

Week 2-6

- Wear your splint all the time.
- You should perform your exercises whilst wearing the splint.
- Start gentle exercises (overleaf) as instructed by your physio.
- Discomfort with exercises and stretches is okay, but try to avoid pain.
- Try to avoid tight gripping, pinching or lifting anything with your hand that was operated on.



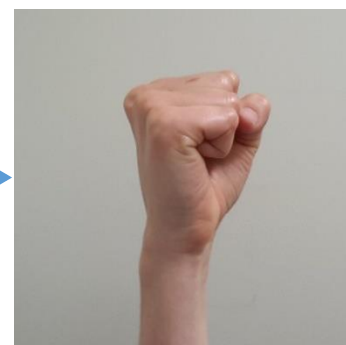
Exercises

Aim to do these every 2 hours. Please note these images show the exercises without a splint to make it easier to follow.

1. Bend the middle joint as far as comfortable. Extend to your splint or the table (as shown). Repeat 10 times.



2. Bend and straighten your fingers.



If you are struggling to bend the fingers, your therapist **may** ask you to use your other hand to push the fingers further.



Scar massage

Once your wound is dry and healed, you can start scar massage. Initially, get used to touching the scar. Then begin to apply pressure whilst moving in a circular movement over the scar, ensuring some movement of the skin. You may add a small amount of moisturising cream to rub across and around the scar to keep the skin moving freely. Do this for 3-5 mins, 4 times a day.

Week 6-8

- You can wear your splint less, only putting it on at night and when using your hand for daily activities.
- It is safe to perform light activities, but you should wear your splint while doing them (e.g. washing up, using cutlery, etc.)

Week 8-12

With guidance from your physio you can...

- Perform strengthening exercises (see below). These exercises should be done **2-3 times a week**, with rest days in between.
- Slowly wean yourself off your splint, though you may still need it for extra support with heavier activities of daily living (e.g. pouring a kettle).
- Increase the use of your hand for daily activities.
- Return to driving, if you have achieved a comfortable grip.
- Do not push into pain.

Strengthening Exercises

1. Fill a bowl with dry rice and begin grasping the rice, working it through your hand so it drops out the side of your hand. Alternatively, you can grasp a sponge or wring out a flannel. This works better when submerged in water, as you can squeeze the water out of the sponge or flannel.



2. Place your hand on a table top with the two end joints in your fingers hanging over the edge of the table. Relax the fingers so they curl. Then straighten the fingers forwards, without lifting the fingers or palm away from the table top.



3. You can strengthen using soft therapy putty, which can be bought online. Roll the putty into a ball and squeeze with your fingers. You should feel your fingers slowly moving into a tighter fist. Repeat this action and work on this until your hand starts to feel tired. This may take over 30 seconds.





Rehab tips for your hand and wrist

- **Warm water exercises** - Once all wounds have healed, submerge the affected hand/arm in warm water for 5 minutes and practise the exercises you have been taught.
- **Massage** – Once your wounds are healed, rub into the affected area for 3-5mins, every 2-3 hours. You may wish to use moisturising cream. Massage will help decrease swelling, improve movement, soften scars and de-sensitise the area affected. Your therapist can guide you.
- If you have any open wounds, monitor for signs of infection (redness, hot, swollen, burning pain, discharge from wound or feeling feverish). If you have any of these signs then visit your GP or A&E.

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

Hand Therapy

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Please contact the Patient Support and Complaints Team (PSCT) if you require this leaflet in a different format, or would like to feedback your experience of the hospital.

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