

# Extensor Tendon Repair

## Hand Therapy Patient Information

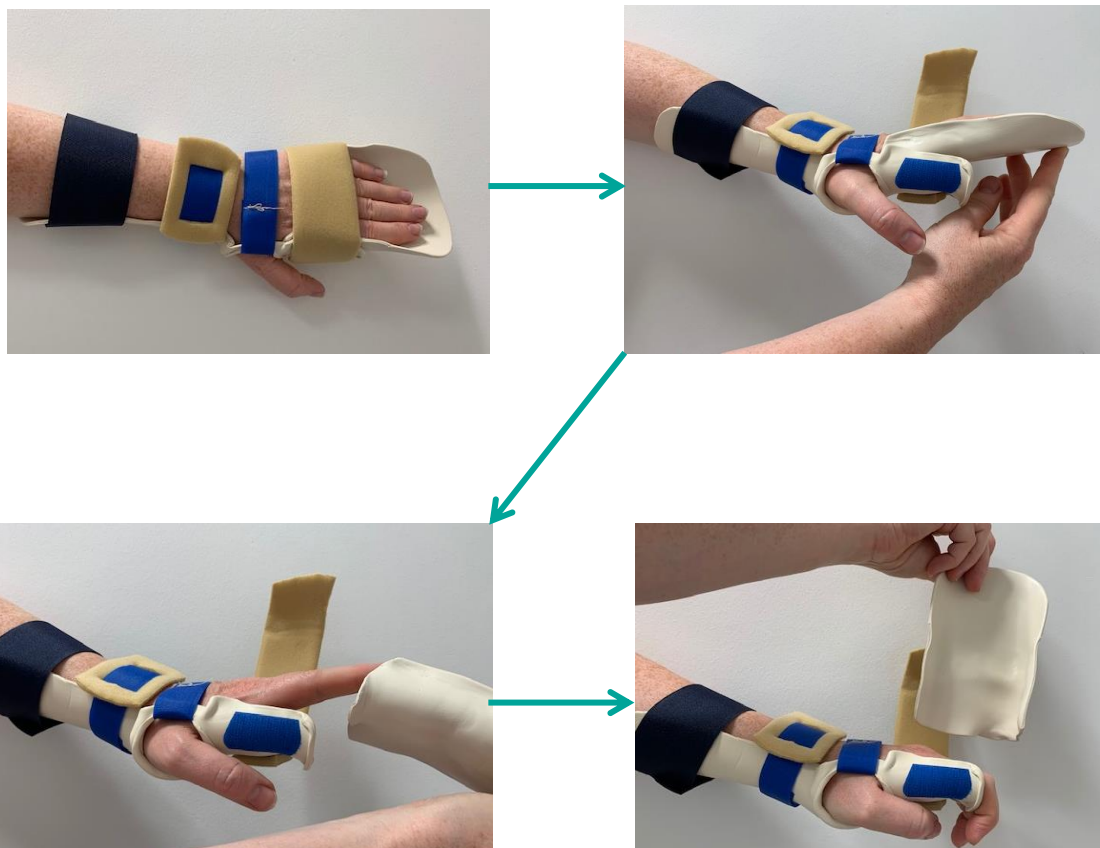
You have had a tendon/s repaired in your hand/forearm. The repair is **very weak** at the moment; therefore a splint has been made to protect it and to prevent you from using your hand. You **must wear the splint all the time**.

You will be taught the exercises in this booklet to complete **hourly** to move your tendon safely and help prevent it from 'sticking down'.

### Rehabilitation (0-3 Weeks)

- When at rest, keep your hand raised to help reduce swelling.
- Wear your splint all of the time, **except** for the following exercises.
- **Do not** get your splint wet or place it on anything hot.
- 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 physiotherapist.
- **Do not** use your hand for anything other than the exercises you are taught.
- Once your stitches have been removed (approx. 10-14 days post-op) or have begun to dissolve (absorbable), you can begin scar massage. Your therapist will teach you how to do this.
- If you have a lag (your physio will discuss this) and are **unable** to fully extend your fingers your therapist will consider fabricating an extra piece to your splint to straighten your fingers at night and intermittently during the day

Below is an image of the 'paddle' piece for the splint, if you are struggling to fully straighten the finger(s). This can be taken out in the day to complete the exercises. Follow this guide below to remove the paddle.



Unclip the paddle at the thumb and slide forwards

Remove the paddle and begin your exercises

**This 'paddle' must be replaced after your exercises. To do so, reverse the guide above.**

## Exercises

1. Keeping the splint on, gently curl your fingers over the edge of the splint and hold for 3 seconds. Then straighten your fingers up. Repeat this 10 times.



2. Take off your splint and **do not bend your wrist or fingers forward. Use your uninjured hand** to support the wrist backwards (in extension - see below). Keep the fingers straight and gently bend at the knuckles **only** within the limits of pain. **Do not make a fist.** Repeat this 5 times.



3. If your wound has healed, use hand cream to massage your scar by applying firm pressure and moving in small circles. Do this for 3-5 minutes regularly.



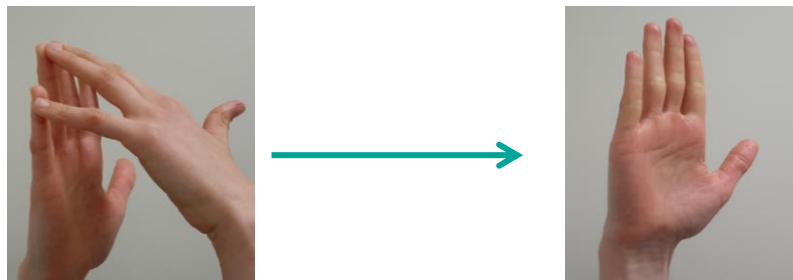


## Rehabilitation (3-5 Weeks)

- Continue to wear your splint **all of the time**, except for your exercises.
- If advised by your physiotherapist, you may remove your splint for careful hand hygiene only.
- Complete all of your previous exercises (Weeks 0-3) before these exercises.

## Exercises

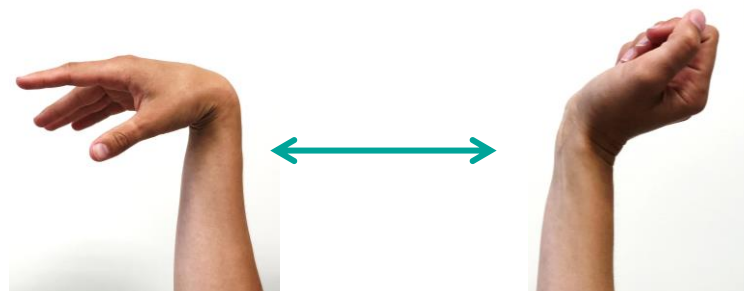
1. Using your other hand, push your fingers straight and try to keep them there. Hold for 5 seconds then relax before repeating 5 times.



2. Straighten your fingers fully. Then make a half fist, reaching your fingers to the tip of your thumb. **Do not** strain against tight adhesions. You should not be making a full fist. Do this 10 times.



3. With a **relaxed thumb and fingers**, bend your wrist forwards, letting your fingers straighten, and then backwards letting your fingers curl. Do this 5 times.





## Rehabilitation (5-6 weeks)

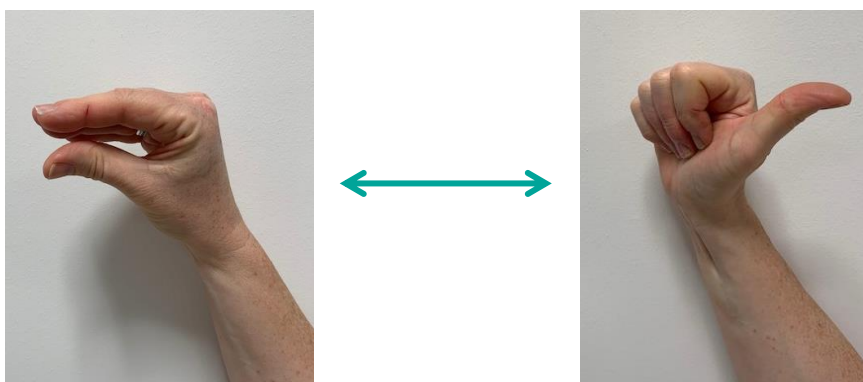
- Continue to wear your splint **all of the time**, except for your exercises.
- You can remove your splint for careful hand hygiene only.
- Complete all of your previous exercises (Weeks 0-3 & 3-5) before these exercises.

## Exercises

1. Bend your wrist backwards (approximately 45 degrees) and gradually try to make a fist. **Do not force this.** Do this 10 times, repeating 5-6 times per day. Increase over the next 2-3 weeks.



2. Keeping your fingers straight, bend at the knuckles. Then bend your fingers to make a 'flat fist' so the finger tips rest against the palm. Do this 10 times.





## Rehabilitation (6-8 Weeks)

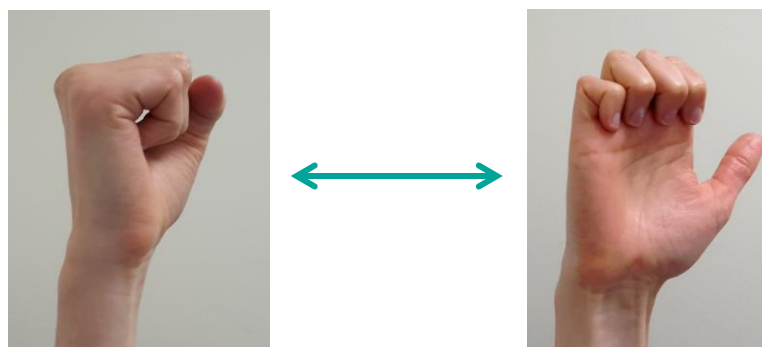
- You can wear the splint less now. Wear it at night and any time you feel your hand may be '**at risk**' e.g. in crowds.
- Continue all your exercises and scar massage
- Use your hand within the limits set by your Hand Therapist.
- **Avoid** pinching forcefully and pushing hard against any objects (e.g. pushing doors open, getting out of the bath and pushing out of a chair).
- **Do not** lift anything heavier than a bag of sugar.
- You cannot drive yet.

## Exercises

1. Grasp rice gently, letting the rice cascade through your fingers. Work for 30 seconds initially and build up gradually.



2. Make a fist. Keeping the tips of the fingers bent, straighten your big knuckles so that you end up in a hook fist. Do this 10 times.







## Rehabilitation (8-10 weeks)

- Your tendon is getting a **little** stronger now.
- Your Hand Therapist will teach you exercises to help build strength and increase the movement in your fingers.
- Continue your scar massage and all your exercises.
- You can consider **driving** (ensure you have appropriate movement and strength to grip and feel comfortable with your own decision that you are capable of driving safely).
- You can start doing light work e.g. writing, dusting or using a keyboard.
- **Do not** play contact sports, lift anything heavier than 3kg, complete lots of repetitive work e.g. writing for long periods.

## Rehabilitation (10-12 weeks)

Your tendon is getting stronger. Your hand and arm will be weak due to lack of use. Your therapist will teach you exercises to help get the strength back.

## Rehabilitation (12+ weeks)

Check with your therapist before returning to heavy manual work, contact sports or sports that require prolonged periods of holding e.g. bouldering/climbing. It is **very important** to discuss any problems or concerns you have with your therapist.

**If you have any problems in the future, please contact your physiotherapist.  
Contact details are below.**

### Hand Therapy

Brownsword Therapies Centre (Dept F1)  
Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust  
Combe Park, Bath BA1 3NG  
**01225 821241**

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](mailto:ruh-tr.PALS@nhs.net) or telephone 01225 825656 / 826319.