

Active Flexor Tendon Protocol

Week 0 – 6

One or more of the tendons that bend your fingers have been repaired. It will take at least 8 weeks following your surgery for the tendon(s) to heal and 12 weeks until you can return to unlimited activities. You will therefore need advice from your Therapist and Doctor on when to begin specific activities again.

You must follow the advice below, if you don't, you risk breaking the repaired tendon(s).

Do

- Keep your arm/hand elevated to minimise swelling.
- Lift your arm above your head regularly to maintain shoulder movement.
- Bend and straighten your elbow regularly to maintain movement.
- Gently bend and straighten your thumb regularly to maintain movement.
- Keep your splint on at all times for the next 6 weeks.
- Secure a plastic bag over your splint while showering to keep it dry.
- If your splint breaks or moves so that it is no longer protecting your hand you must contact your Therapist immediately.
- If you suddenly lose the ability to bend any of your fingers (without assistance) you must contact your Therapist or go to the emergency department.

Do Not

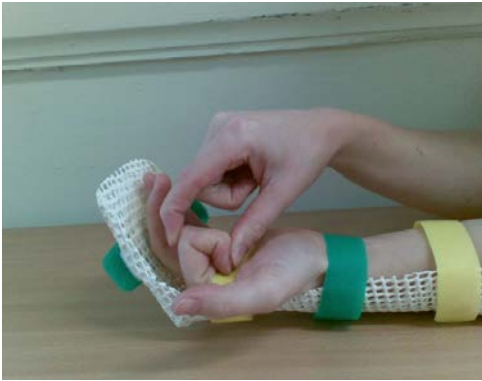
- Do not use your injured hand.
- Do not remove your splint at any times unless asked to do so by your Occupational Therapist.
- Do not push your fingers back towards the splint with the other hand (i.e. no passive straightening).
- Do not perform more than the recommended amount of hand exercises.
- Do not drive/lift or grip

Exercises Weeks 0 – 6

The following exercises are designed to protect the surgical repair of your tendons, while gradually improving movement and strength of your hand. The exercises are made up of stages and progress in intensity over time. It is important to follow each stage carefully.

Remove the top finger strap of your splint for your exercises.

Every hour:



Relax your fingers and then use your unaffected hand to curl your fingers one at a time into your palm making sure that all 3 joints are bent as far as possible. **Hold for 5-10 seconds.**

Straighten all your fingers so your fingertips just touch the back of the splint.

Repeat 5 times.

4 Times Daily:



Exercise 1:

Use your other hand to bend all of your fingers into a fist, then let go and gently hold the position with your own muscle power for **3 seconds.**

Straighten all your fingers so your fingertips just touch the back of the splint.

Repeat 5 times.



Exercise 2:

Slowly bend your fingers to make a loose fist without assistance. Do not try to make a gripping fist, and ensure all your finger joints are bending.

Straighten all your fingers so your fingertips just touch the back of the splint.

Repeat 5 times.

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Weeks 6 – 8

It is now 6 weeks since your operation. Your tendon(s) are becoming stronger but still require protection. You will not be able to return to unlimited activities until 12 weeks following your operation. It is very important that you follow the instructions given to you by your hand therapist to get the best outcome for your hand.

You can start to remove your splint during light activities throughout the day. You still need to take advice from your hand therapist on when you may begin specific activities again.

Do

- Remove your splint and use your hand normally for light activities within your pain limits, as instructed by your hand therapist e.g. showering, dressing, eating, keyboarding, hand writing, gesturing etc.
- Continue to wear your splint when you are at risk of getting knocked/bumped or when you at risk of using your hand for moderate to heavy activity or tight gripping.
- Continue to massage your scar.
- Wear your splint overnight.

Do Not

- You must follow the advice below to avoid breaking the repaired tendon(s).
- Do not push your fingers straight with the other hand.
- Do not push your wrist back with the other hand.
- Do not use your injured hand to grip or grasp tightly e.g. opening a tight jar/door/bottle, turning a tight tap, chopping a tough piece of meat/hard vegetable.
- Do not straighten your fingers and bend your wrist right back at the same time.
- Do not make a fist and bend your wrist down at the same time.
- Do not lift anything greater than 1kg at 6 weeks following your operation, 2kg at 7 weeks following your operation, and 5kg at 8 weeks following your operation.
- Do not drive until you have clearance from your Doctor and/or your Occupational Therapist.

Exercises Weeks 6 – 8

Complete 5 times daily:

Gently squeeze a soft sponge in warm water, slowly, **repeat 10 times**.

Tendon Gliding Exercises – see exercise sheet attached.

Finger Blocking Exercises – see exercise sheet attached.

Active Wrist Exercises – see exercise sheet attached.

Please contact your therapist if you have any queries or concerns.

Therapist: _____

Phone: (07) 3646 7100