



## Exercises after Flexor Tendon Repair (Fingers)

### Therapy Services

You may like to watch the short film to accompany this leaflet on the ABMU Health Board TV Youtube Channel:

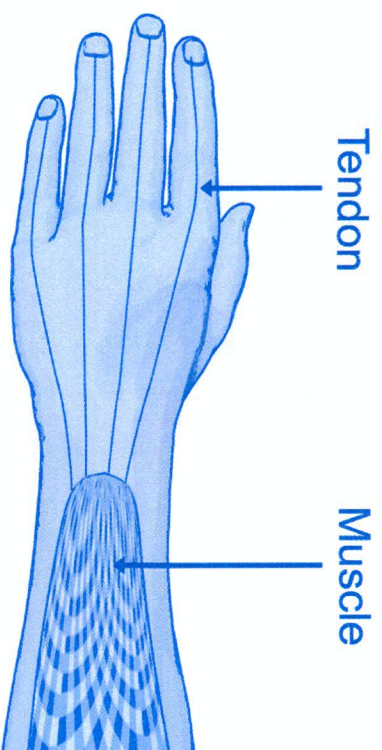
*'How to Care for your Flexor Tendon Injury'*

Or type this link into your internet window/ browser:

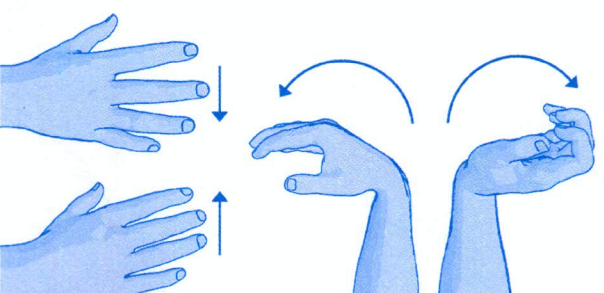
**[goo.gl/IvpzVH](http://goo.gl/IvpzVH)**

Also found here via QR code:





## Appointments

[illegible]

Bend wrist forwards and backwards.

Lay your hand flat on table as shown. Turn your hand inward toward your Thumb as far as you can. Then turn your hand out towards your little finger



Begin with elbow tucked into your side.

Turn palm upward to face the ceiling.

Then turn palm down to face the floor.

These exercises should be done every 1 – 2 hours. You can now start to use your hand for light activities only.

It is not advisable to perform heavy lifting, strong gripping or contact sport for 3 months following your surgery. You should also avoid forcing the wrist and fingers backwards with the other hand for the next 2 weeks.

Wear the splint for protection (when you are at risk of getting your hand knocked) and at night for another 2 weeks unless instructed otherwise by your therapist.



## Exercises

These 2 exercises should be carried out every hour during the day (unless instructed otherwise).

Gently bend each finger including the operated finger(s) towards the palm using the other hand (see Fig. 1a). Then straighten your fingers fully to the splint without help from the other hand (see Fig. 1b).

Do this 5 times.

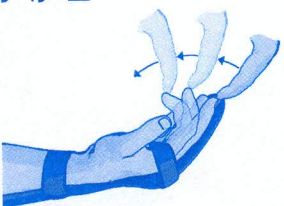


Fig 1a

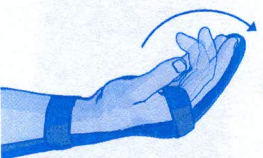


Fig 1b

Fig 2a



Bend all the fingers as far as they can go on their own but do not squeeze against the palm (see Fig. 2a). Then straighten fully to the splint without help from the other hand (see Fig. 2b).

Do this 10 times.

Fig 2b

## What happens now?

- On discharge from hospital regular physiotherapy appointments will be arranged at the most convenient hospital in your local area.
- You will need to return to Morriston Hospital after 2 weeks to have stitches out and at 6 and 12 weeks for essential check ups in Hand Therapy Clinic.
- Your therapist or doctor will advise you of any changes to these appointments.
- Remember it's your hand – look after it!

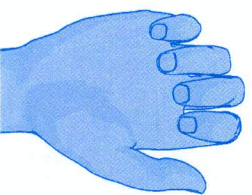
| Do's   | Don't's   |
|--|---|
| 1. <u>Do</u> exercise regularly as instructed during the day (rest them completely in between) | 1. <u>Do not</u> remove the splint.   |
| 2. <u>Do</u> keep the hand elevated to prevent swelling until wounds have healed.              | 2. <u>Do not</u> allow your splint to get hot – it will melt (avoid radiators, hot water etc.)            |
| 3. <u>Do</u> keep your splint on 24 hours a day for 6 weeks.                                   | 3. <u>Do not</u> attempt to alter your splint – any problems contact your Occupational Therapist.         |
| 4. <u>Do</u> keep your splint dry using a plastic bag when in the bath or shower.              | 4. <u>Do not</u> use any of your fingers or thumb on the operated hand for anything other than exercises. |
| 5. <u>Do</u> stop or cut down smoking. This will help with healing.                            | 5. <u>Do not</u> force the fingers back to the splint using the other hand.                               |
|  | 6. <u>Do not</u> drive for 8 weeks.   |
|  | 7. <u>Do not</u> play contact sport for 12 weeks  |

Do not start the following exercise until your splint is removed

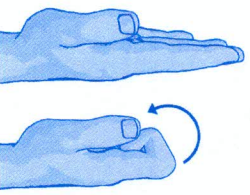


Start these exercises only when your therapist advises you to do so **Week 6 — Finger Flexor Tendon**

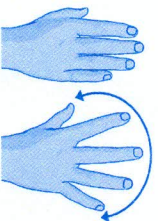
It is now 6 weeks following your hand operation. Your therapist will instruct you on the following exercises.



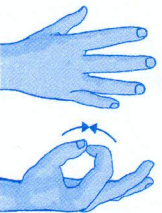
Bend fingers into your palm, then straighten fingers.



Bend first two joints of your fingers down as shown and then straighten fingers.



Spread fingers as far apart as you can, then close again.



Pinch thumb and first finger together as shown. Repeat with other fingers as instructed.

**What is a tendon and what does it do?**

- Tendons are long strings which connect the muscles of the forearm to the bones of the fingers and thumb. Tendons take all the strain when bending your fingers to use your hand.

**Why do I have to protect my repaired tendon?**

- Your operation involved complex microsurgery and needs strict and skilful care.
- It takes 6 weeks for your tendon to really begin healing, during this time it is essential that you wear your splint 24 hours a day.

**Why do I need to exercise my hand?**

The following exercises are important to prevent tendons becoming stuck to each other and surrounding structures which can cause your fingers to become stiff.

**What will happen if I do not follow the advice given?**

- You may cause further damage to your tendon which could require more surgery.
- You may have problems using your hand in the future.

**When can I go back to work?**

It will take 3 months for your tendon to regain normal strength. When you return to work will depend on the type of job you do. Please ask your therapist's advice.