

# Central slip injury



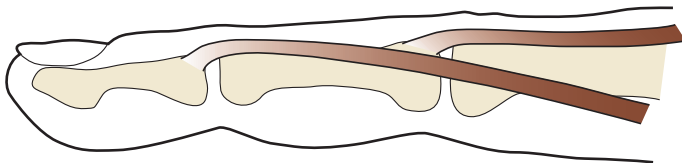
## Information for patients

MSK Outpatients - Hand Therapy

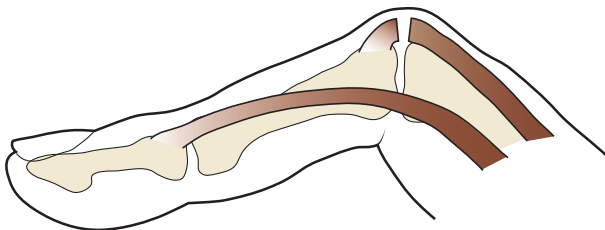


## What is a central slip injury?

A central slip tendon injury is caused by damage to the tendon over the middle part of your finger. Damage to the tendon results in you being unable to straighten your finger.



**Position of finger with a normal central slip**



**Position of finger with a central slip injury**

## How do I protect my finger?

Your therapist will provide you with 3 thermoplastic splints to protect and exercise your healing tendon. Thermoplastic is a type of plastic which is softened by heat that can be moulded to fit your finger.

Each splint will be numbered and you will be given an explanation of how and when to wear them.

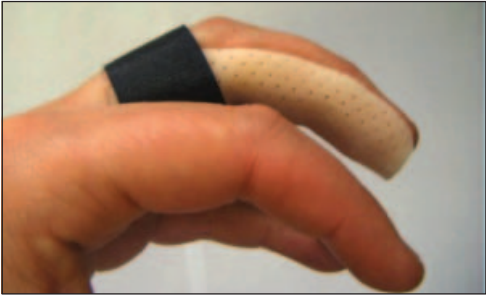
## Splint 1 – gutter splint



The gutter splint is straight and should be worn constantly for the first 5 weeks and should only be removed to exercise your finger using splints 2 and 3. When you remove splint 1 to exercise your finger, do not try and bend your finger without using splint 2 or 3 to protect your surgery.

Your therapist will advise you when splint 1 can be removed completely.

## Splint 2 – long exercising splint



Carefully remove splint 1 and place splint 2 in position at the base of your finger. The splint can be held in position with your uninjured hand or secured with a Velcro strap.

Slowly bend your finger to the splint (to the count of 3), and return to a fully straightened position, as shown above. Hold for 5 seconds then repeat the exercise.

This exercise or the exercise using splint 2 should be repeated 20 times every hour, unless directed otherwise by your therapist. The bend in the exercise splint will be increased by your therapist as you progress through your treatment and as your tendon becomes stronger.

### **Correct wrist position when using exercise splints**

When carrying out this exercise your wrist should be positioned slightly bent forward at 30 degrees and your knuckles should be straight. Your therapist will practice this position with you.

Please bring all your splints to each appointment.



## Splint 3 – short exercising splint



Carefully remove splint 2 and place splint 3 on your injured finger, as shown. It is important that you do not bend the middle joint and that it is held straight by your uninjured hand.

To exercise you need to try and bend slowly the end joint of your injured finger as much as possible and straighten it again. Hold for 5 seconds and then repeat. This technique will be demonstrated by your hand therapist.

The exercise using splint 3 should be repeated 20 times every hour, unless directed otherwise by your therapist.

## Week 5

You will continue to wear splint 1 but will begin gentle exercise without using splints 2 and 3. Your therapist will tailor an exercise programme to meet your individual needs.

Do not push your finger into your palm.

Do not carry out any contact sports.

## Week 6

Your tendon should now have healed enough to cope with normal daily activities but your finger/s may still feel weak. You will need to continue to work on regaining full movement, if you have not achieved this yet. You will need to start to gradually strengthen your hand and tendon. Most people can usually return to unlimited activities 12 weeks after their date of surgery, for you this will be:

**Date you should be able to return to normal activities:**

The vast majority of patients find that they regain full movement in their finger when they carefully follow the advice in this leaflet and by their therapist. You should be aware however that this is not always guaranteed and there is always a risk of complications which can affect the overall result. If you have any concerns about your injury please follow the advice below.

## How should I look after my splints?

Splints should only be cleaned with a damp cloth. They will lose their shape if you use warm water or place them near a heat source.

## General do's and don'ts

**Do** be patient, the effort you put into your rehabilitation is significantly related to the end result obtained from your healing tendon.

**Do** keep your arm/hand elevated to minimise swelling, particularly soon after your injury.

**Do** keep all your uninjured joints moving, including your shoulder and elbow.

**Do not** try to alter your splints in any way.

**Do not** take splint 1 off for any reason other than exercising until advised to do so by your therapist (including bathing and sleeping).

**Do not** drive until advised it is safe to do so by your therapist.

## What do I do if my splint is uncomfortable?

Please contact the department if you experience any of the following:

- Pins and needles sensation other than that you may already have
- Pain caused by the splint
- Any areas of pressure
- Defects in the splint
- Any changes in circulation e.g. changes in the colour or temperature of your hand

## If you have any questions or problems regarding your hand injury, splint or treatment please contact your therapist on:

Telephone: **0114 226 6457** or **271 5799** and leave a message for your therapist.

## What should I do if I suddenly can't move my finger?

If you find there is a 'snap' or sudden decrease in movement contact the hand centre immediately on:

Telephone: **0114 275 2325** or **go to A&E.**



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