

# Advice following trigger finger release surgery

**i** Information for patients  
The Sheffield Hand Centre



**PROUD TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

SHEFFIELD TEACHING HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST





## **Why have I been given this leaflet?**

You have been given this leaflet as you have had surgery on your hand(s) to release a trigger finger or trigger thumb. Most of our patients now have their follow up care after surgery in the community. You are therefore unlikely to be given a routine appointment to be seen again at The Sheffield Hand Centre.

We have provided the following information to help you understand what to expect and when to seek help. We hope you will find this useful and wish you a good recovery.

## **What can I expect following my operation?**

The local anaesthetic will wear off a couple of hours after your operation and you may start to feel some discomfort. The pain is likely to be stronger during the first few days but it should settle down quite quickly during the following couple of weeks. Simple painkillers, such as paracetamol, should help with this.

There will be a small wound at the base of your finger or thumb, held together with stitches (sutures). There will be a large bandage on your hand after your operation.

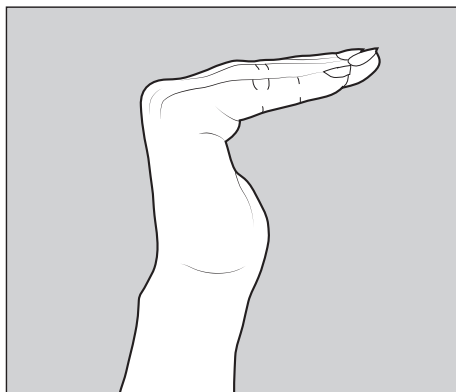
## **Is there anything I can do to help my recovery?**

Your hand may be swollen so it is important to keep it raised above your heart for the first couple of days. This will reduce the swelling and will help with the pain. It can be done by using a sling or by sitting with pillows or cushions so that your hand is level with your shoulder. You can also lie with your hand across your chest on a pillow or cushion.

It is important to move your fingers and thumb regularly after your operation, even if they feel stiff. The following exercises may help you to improve the range of movement in your hand.

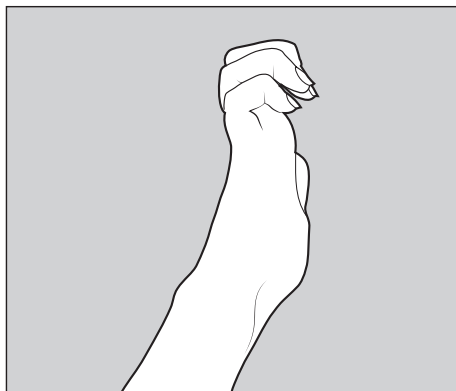
Keeping your fingers straight, bend at the knuckles and return to a flat hand.

Repeat 5-10 times as pain will allow.

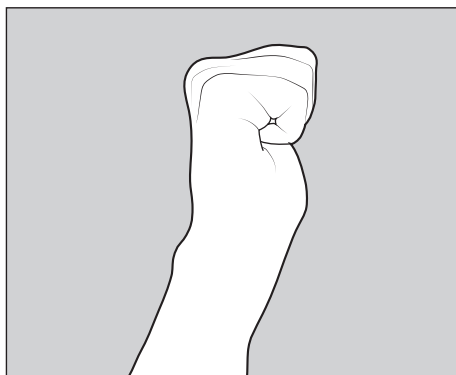


Bend the tips of your fingers and the middle joints, then straighten.

Repeat 5 -10 times as pain will allow.



Make a fist, then straighten your fingers 5 -10 times as pain will allow.



## **When and where will I have my stitches removed?**

Before going home the nurse will tell you when you will need to have your stitches removed. This is usually 10-14 days after the operation. Your stitches will be removed by your Practice Nurse at your GP surgery.

You will be given a letter to take with you to let the Practice Nurse know what operation has been done and the type of stitches you have. You will need to make this appointment as soon as possible after being discharged from the hospital.

## **What should I look out for after my operation?**

Please contact the Hand Centre or, out of hours, contact the Surgical Assessment Centre if you experience any of the following symptoms:

- Bleeding through your dressing that does not stop despite raising your hand and applying continuous firm pressure on your dressing for 10 minutes
- Your thumb or fingers change colour, have altered sensation, or feel cold to touch

Please seek medical attention via an urgent GP appointment or at a Walk-in Centre if:

- Your wound becomes red, hot and swollen. This may suggest you have a wound infection, which can be treated with antibiotics

## **How long will I be off work?**

The length of time will vary from person to person depending on the type of work you do. If you require a sick note please ask your surgeon or one of the nurses before discharge.

## **When can I return to normal activities?**

Your hand can be used for light activities a couple of days after your surgery. You can build up to normal activities over the next couple of weeks.

## **When can I drive after my operation?**

This will vary depending on your specific case. It is advisable to check with your surgeon and your own car insurance provider.

## **What can I expect over the next few months?**

- Scar tenderness is usually temporary and is helped by regular massage with a moisturising cream. Sometimes it can take a few months to completely settle down.
- Discomfort or stiffness for the first 3 months is not uncommon. If this continues for more than 3 months please ask your GP to arrange a review with your hand surgeon.
- It usually takes around 3 months to regain full strength and a comfortable scar. If you are struggling with symptoms, please arrange a GP appointment for a review of your pain medication and, if necessary, a further sick note.
- In severe cases, movement may take a long time to recover, or, your hand may never fully recover.

## **Who should I contact if I have any concerns or queries?**

**If you have a problem or need advice after going home please contact:**

The Sheffield Hand Centre

- **0114 305 2364**  
Monday to Friday: 7.00am – 7.30pm  
Saturday: 7.00am – 3.00pm

**Outside of these hours when the Hand Centre is closed please ring:**

The Surgical Assessment Centre

- **0114 226 9400**

**Alternatively you can contact:**

- Your GP
- Local Walk-in Centre
- NHS helpline on 111



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