

Hand Therapy

Short Arc Active Range of Motion (SAAROM)

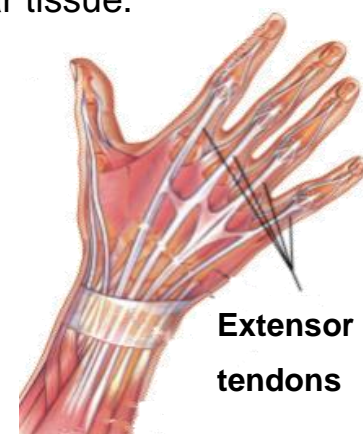
The surgery you have had is to repair the tendon(s) that straighten your finger(s).

Tendons are smooth, thick, flexible strings that connect muscles to the bone. When muscles contract they make the fingers to move, similar to a pulley system.

Tendons have a limited blood supply. This means they take a long time to heal. Research suggests a repaired tendon takes 16 weeks to return to full strength. Normally these tendons glide through the tissues in your hand. After injury and surgery these tendons can get stuck in scar tissue.

Following repair of the tendon it is important to:

- Protect the repair from stretch or unwanted movement
- Maintain movement of the finger joints
- Encourage safe tendon glide



Source: <http://img.sparknotes.com> (21/08/2013)

Although the tendon has been repaired, it is still very weak and needs to be protected.

Your therapist will provide you with three splints; one resting splint and two exercise splints (see next page). You will also be given exercises that will allow you to move your tendon in a safe way. This will help the tendon to heal and stop the tendon sticking to soft tissue structures. It is important to do these exercises as instructed. Doing more exercises will not make your tendon heal quicker.

Please bring your splints to all of your appointments. Your therapist will need to make adjustments as your tendon heals.



Phase 1: Week 1-5

Your **resting splint** is to be worn at all times (day and night), **except** when doing your exercises. Continue moving all of your uninjured joints to prevent them from getting stiff.

Avoid use of your injured finger to reduce the chance of breaking the tendon repair.

During exercises your wrist must be bent forward (about 30°) and your first knuckle of the injured finger must be held straight.

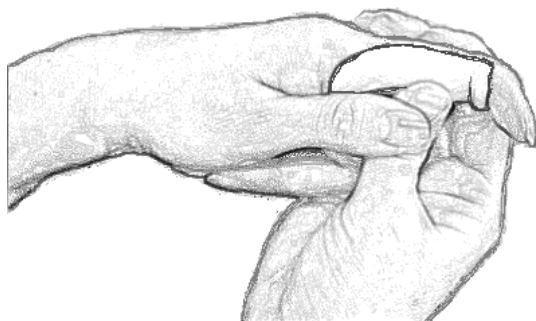
Do _____ exercise sessions per day.
Do _____ repetitions of each exercise.
Hold for _____ seconds.

- **Apply splint A:** bend your finger to the surface of the splint, then straighten as far as you can.



Source: Adapted by J.Chapman from a photo www.msdlatinamerica.com/ebooks/HandSurgery/sid587633.html (10/07/2013)

- **Apply splint B:** bend and straighten the tip of your finger as far as you can.



Source: Adapted by J.Chapman from a photo www.msdlatinamerica.com/ebooks/HandSurgery/sid587633.html (10/07/2013)

Phase 2: Week 5-6

Your therapist will advise you to wear your resting splint less and start using your hand for light activities up to 500 grams (e.g. brushing your teeth, holding cutlery, and writing). If you notice your finger starts to droop, wear your resting splint more and contact your therapist.

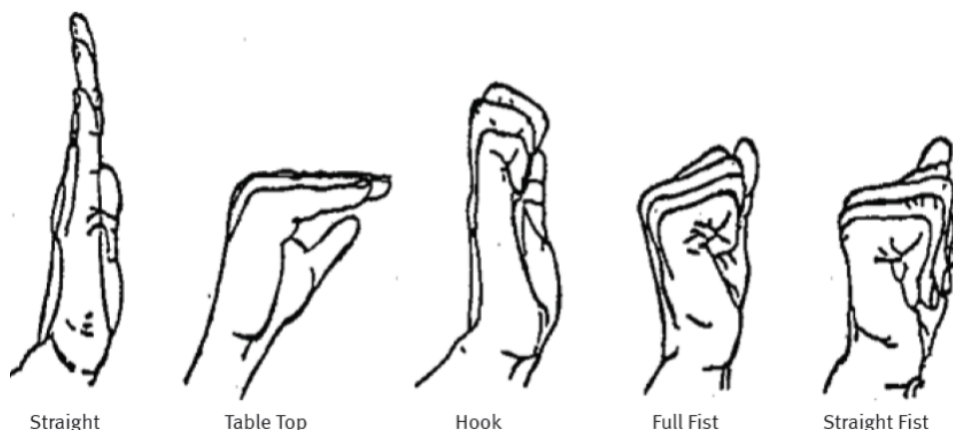
Splints A and B are no longer required for exercises.

Do _____ exercise sessions per day.

Do _____ repetitions of each exercise.

Hold for _____ seconds.

- Start and finish each exercise with your fingers straight.



Phase 3: Week 7-12

Your therapist will advise you when to increase the weight you lift with your hand (e.g. increase by 1kg each week with the aim of reaching 5kg by week 12) and will start strengthening exercises.

From week 12 onwards your doctor may allow you to return to work, sports and leisure activities that are more physically demanding.

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

Therapist _____ Phone Number _____

Acknowledgements: Sunshine Coast University Hospital. Images: Jill Chapman (Occupational Therapist); Philadelphia Hand to Shoulder Center.

Published: May 2014 Reviewed: March 2019 Review due: March 2022 Handout number: 52.0
An initiative of the Queensland Hand Therapy Network (QHTN).