

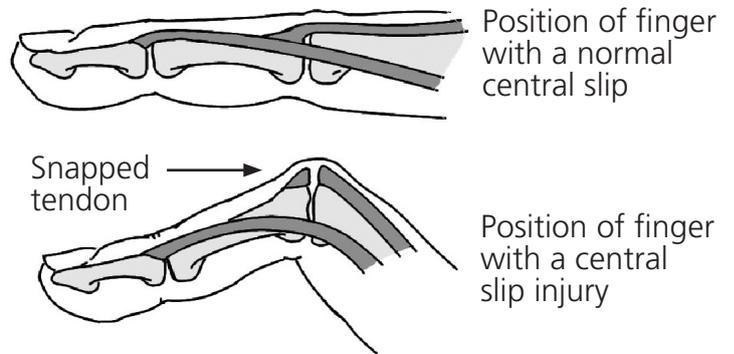
Advice and exercises following your central slip injury

Patient information

Clinical and diagnostic services centre -
Hand Therapy

What is a central slip injury?

The injury you have sustained is known as a central slip injury which is sometimes called a boutonniere deformity. This means that part of the tendon which straightens the middle joint of your finger has been injured. This may have been caused by an impact to the middle joint or because of a cut on the back of the finger near the joint.



What treatment will I expect to undergo?

During the healing phase your tendon will need strict care. It will take up to 12 weeks for your tendon to fully heal and be strong enough for you to return to unlimited activities. If your tendon was cut you may have required surgery to repair the damaged tendon. You must keep the middle joint in your injured finger/s completely straight (not allowing it to bend for any reason) for the first three weeks. You will be given a made to measure thermoplastic splint which will hold the middle joint in your finger completely straight. After this you will be required to wear a different splint during the day and your original splint over night for a further three weeks. The new splint will allow your middle joint to bend however protect the healing tendon while it straightens until it is strong enough to do this on its own.

What follow up hand therapy should I expect?

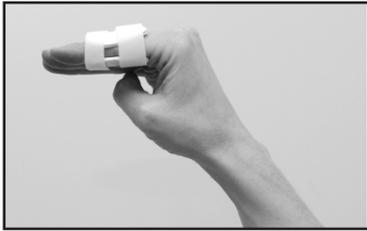
You will be given an appointment with the hand therapy department approximately one week after your splint was made. This appointment will be to check your splint is fitting correctly and maintaining your finger in a straight position to allow the tendon to heal. Your skin and any potential wound will also be checked and you will be given advice if appropriate about massaging your scar. At approximately three weeks following your injury (if repaired via surgery) or commencement of splinting you will be given another hand therapy appointment. After this you will be seen by the hand therapy team on a regular basis to progress your hand therapy

Why is it important to exercise?

Exercises are important to allow your tendon to heal and will reduce stiffness and swelling in your finger. Your hand therapist will teach you exercises which you must complete on a regular basis through out the day – normally every one to two hours. Your hand therapist will advise you of when to move onto new exercises.

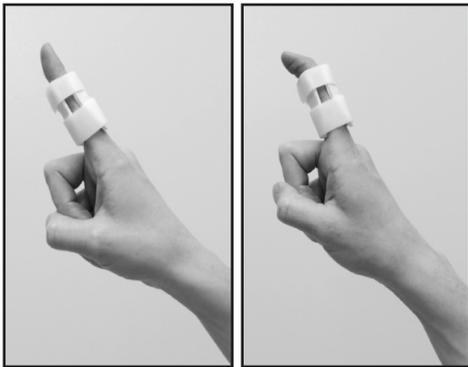
Weeks one to three:

MCPJ flexion and extension



Bend your fingers from the knuckles, making sure that you keep your fingers straight. Hold this position for 5 seconds and then straighten. Repeat 10 times every 1-2 hours

Isolated DIPJ flexion and extension



Gently bend the tip of your finger over the edge of the splint and hold for 5 seconds. Then, straighten your finger tip and hold for 5 seconds. You can hold the splint onto your finger with the other hand if this is easier. Make sure you

keep the joint that has been splinted, straight. Repeat 10 times every 1-2 hours.

Do not start the exercise below until instructed by your therapist – this will usually begin three weeks after your treatment starts.

Week three onwards:

Isolated PIPJ flexion and extension



Whilst wearing the splint, start to bend at the middle joint and then allow the splint to return your finger to a straight position. Repeat 10 times every 1-2 hours.

You may be shown some additional exercises depending on your progress – please follow your hand therapists instructions.

Author: Hand Therapy Team

What general advice should I follow?

- You can use your hand for daily activities with the splint always remaining in place - however you should avoid any heavy gripping or lifting until advised by your hand therapist
- Driving should be avoided until advised by your hand therapist
- Elevating your hand above your heart can help to reduce any swelling in your hand or fingers
- It is important you keep the normal movement at all of your joints that are not splinted – this includes other fingers/ thumb, wrist, elbow and shoulder
- Don't allow your splint to be exposed to heat as the plastic may melt and change the fit of the splint on your finger.

What problems might I have?

- Sore skin under the splint
- Splint too big and not staying in place with your middle joint no longer protected
- Splint too tight if swelling increases
- Signs of infection (increased pain, redness, swelling and feeling generally unwell)

Who should I contact if I have any problems?

If you have any problems or questions regarding your hand therapy please contact the hand therapy team on **01642 835595**.