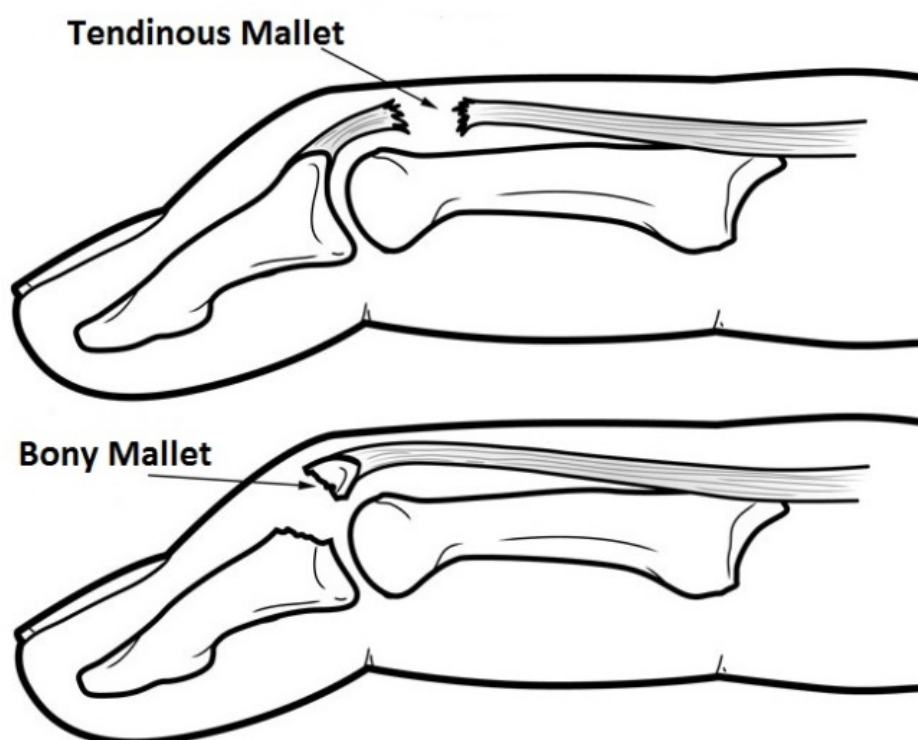


Mallet finger injury

Information for patients

This leaflet explains what a mallet finger injury is and how it is treated. If you have any queries or concerns, please do not hesitate to speak to the therapist caring for you.



What is a mallet finger injury?

It is when the end joint of one of your fingers will not straighten by itself and droops. It can be pushed straight but it will not stay in that position on its own.

There are two types of mallet injury:

- Tendinous – caused by an injury to the tendon that straightens (extends) your finger.
- Bony – caused by an injury to the bone to which the tendon attaches.

How is a mallet finger injury treated?

Most people have hand therapy, provided by an occupational therapist or a physiotherapist, which does not involve surgery. Instead exercise and splinting are used to help your finger recover.

The longer the finger stays bent, the harder it is to fix. Without treatment it will **not** eventually straighten out on its own again.

Splints

They are usually made of a type of plastic, so they are light and slim. Wearing a splint that holds your fingertip straight usually allows your tendon or bone to heal.

You should wear your splint at all times for:

- **Six weeks** if you have a bony mallet injury
- **Eight weeks** if you have a tendinous mallet injury.

If the tape on the splint starts to stretch and come loose: apply an extra loop of tape to hold it in place, so that there is no gap between the finger and the splint. Please check the circulation to the tip of your finger is intact, once the tape has been applied, it will feel cold & numb if it is not.

Can I take the splint off?

The only time you can take it off is when you are with your therapist in the hand therapy department. You run the risk of re-injuring your finger if you take the splint off without the supervision of your therapist. Please raise any concerns you may have about this with your therapist.

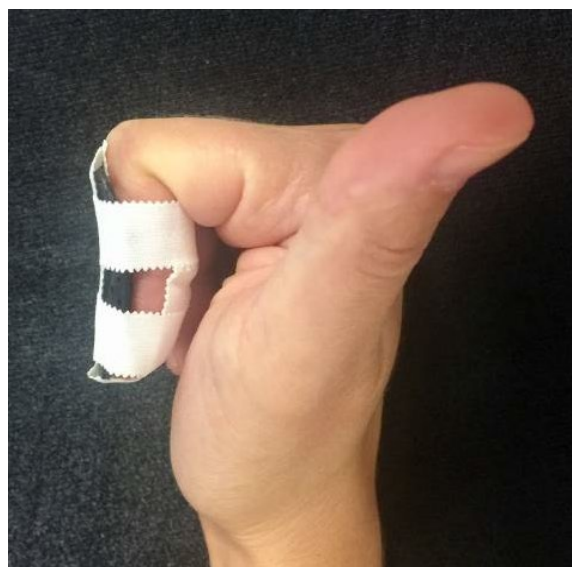
Can I use my hand while wearing the splint?

You can move the unaffected joints freely but you must not do any contact sports, heavy lifting or activities where you need a tight grip. Do not lift, carry or grip objects that weigh more than 2kg/4lb for 12 weeks or as advised by your therapist. You may drive with the splint on, but please check with your insurance company before doing so.

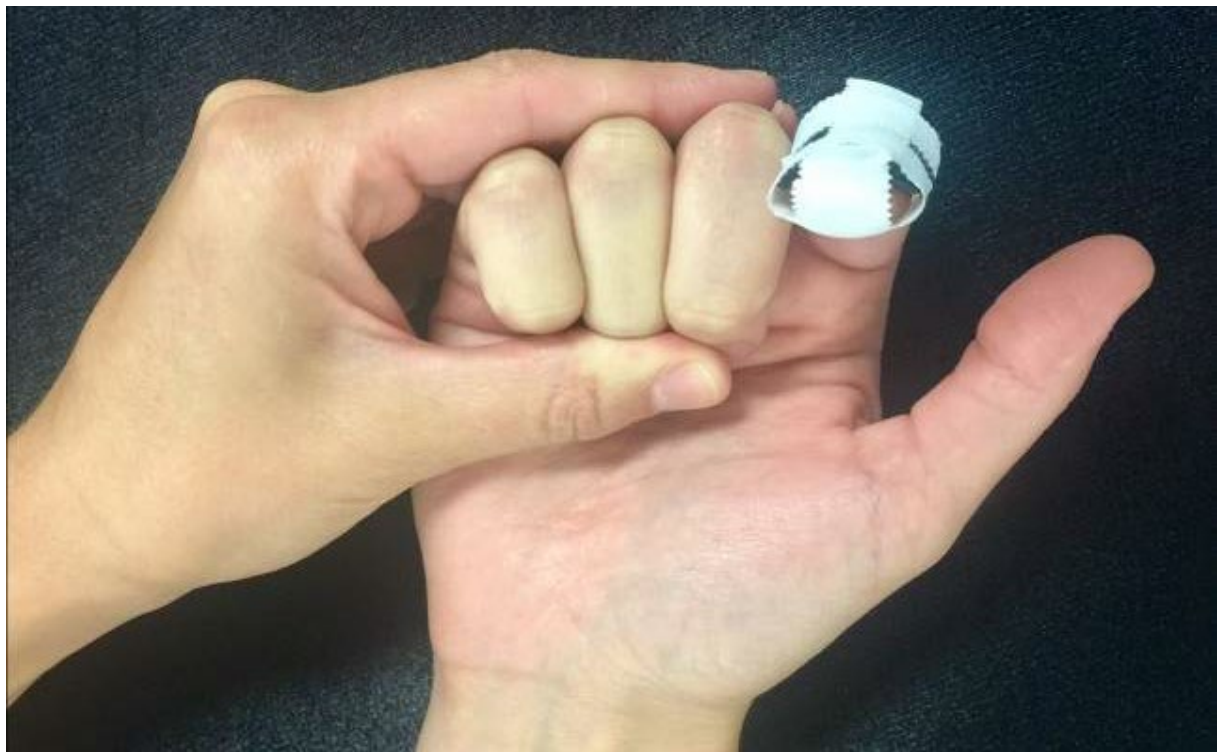
Exercises

Do these exercises 4 - 5 times a day. Do each exercise 5 - 10 times.

Straight fist: Bend all your fingers down to touch your palm, while keeping the tip joints straight, then straighten all the fingers back up again.



Full fist: Gently push your **un-injured** fingers down into a fist using your other hand, make sure they curl all the way in, then straighten all the fingers back up again.



PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) offer support, a wide variety of information and advice to patients, carers and visitors. They can help to sort out problems or concerns through liaison with hospital staff. They can also guide people to the hospital complaints process or to external independent advocacy services if more appropriate. Any views or comments about experience of the hospital services are warmly welcomed and will be used to help improve and develop future services.

King's College Hospital site

Tel: 020 3299 3601

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Princess Royal University Hospital and southern sites

This covers The Princess Royal Hospital, Orpington Hospital, Beckenham Beacon, Queen Mary's Hospital and Sidcup sites.

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If you would like the information in this leaflet in a different language or format, please contact PALS on 020 3299 1844.