

Proximal phalanx fractures

Information for patients

This sheet provides you with information about proximal phalanx fractures and how you can manage this and help your hand injury to heal. If you have any further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact your hand therapist.

What is a proximal phalanx fracture?

Your finger is made up of small bones called phalanges (phalanx singular). If you fracture (or break) one of these bones, you have a phalangeal or phalanx fracture. This time you have injured the proximal phalanx, which is the phalanx closest to your palm.

Healing

Each fracture heals at a different rate, varying between 4 to 8 weeks. Most of the improvement is noticeable in the first 3 months. It may take around one year to regain most of your movement and strength. This timeframe depends on multiple factors including the extent of other injuries, your age, health, nutrition, if you smoke, where the fracture is and the severity of the fracture.

Oedema (swelling)

Swelling often occurs in the hand because of injury or trauma. Examples of treatment for managing oedema include elevation, massage, compression, and exercise. Please ask your therapist what would be appropriate for you.

Hand use

- Week 1 to 6 after injury – light activities only and avoid using the injured finger. The heaviest object you can pick up is a pot of yoghurt or small cup of tea.
- Week 6 to 10 after injury – light activities using the injured finger.
- Week 10 to 12 after injury – medium to heavy activities. For example, lifting a saucepan or kettle, hanging out washing, opening jars, holding a pint glass.

Pain

Use painkillers regularly at the lowest dose needed. Try to time your medication dose before exercising or hand use, to help you to take part in activities. Talk to your GP or pharmacist about which painkillers to take.

Splinting

Depending on the severity of your fracture, a thermoplastic splint may be made for you to protect your joint and promote healing. Or you may be provided with a Bedford splint or advised to complete buddy strapping.

Exercises

If you have been given a splint, your therapist will clarify whether to perform your exercises within it or not.

You may not be able to complete the full range of movement for these exercises at first due to pain or stiffness. Move as far as you can until you feel the stretch, but do not push further into pain.

You should do 10 repetitions of each exercise, 3 to 5 times each day.

Actively bend the middle joint of the finger.
Hold for 10 seconds.



Actively bend the top joint of the finger. Hold for 10 seconds.



Complete this sequence of 5 hand movements

1.



2.



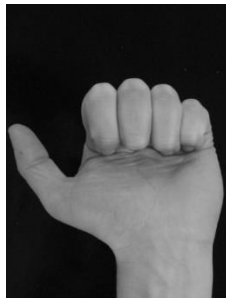
3.



4.



5.



Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about your hand injury, please contact Hand Therapy on 020 3299 8220 or 016 8986 6660 (Monday to Friday, 8.00am to 4.30pm) or on kch-tr.therapyappts@nhs.net.

Sharing your information

King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust has partnered with Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust through the King's Health Partners Academic Health Sciences Centre. We are working together to give our patients the best possible care, so you might find we invite you for appointments at Guy's or St Thomas' hospitals. King's College Hospital and Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trusts share an electronic patient record system, which means information about your health record can be accessed safely and securely by health and care staff at both Trusts. For more information visit www.kch.nhs.uk.

PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) is a service that offers support, information and assistance to patients, relatives and visitors. They can also provide help and advice if you have a concern or complaint that staff have not been able to resolve for you. They can also pass on praise or thanks to our teams.

PALS at King's College Hospital, Denmark Hill, London SE5 9RS

Tel: 020 3299 3601

Email: kch-tr.palsdh@nhs.net

PALS at Princess Royal University Hospital, Farnborough Common, Orpington, Kent BR6 8ND

Tel: 01689 863252

Email: kch-tr.palspruh@nhs.net

If you would like the information in this leaflet in a different language or format, please contact our Communications and Interpreting telephone line on 020 3299 4826 or email kch-tr.accessibility@nhs.net