

Distal Phalanx Fractures

Information for patients

This sheet provides you with information about fractures of the end bone of your fingers 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.

Healing

Each fracture heals at a different rate, varying between 4 to 6 weeks. Most of the improvement is noticeable in the first three months. It may take up to 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.

You may find

- Stiffness and difficulty moving: After a fracture, it's common to experience stiffness in the fingers or hand. This can affect your ability to move your hand normally. Exercises will help improve mobility and strength.
- The tip of your finger might be sensitive to vibration/tapping for a while.

Splinting (support to protect the injury)

Splinting is commonly used to support the fractured bone to allow the bone to heal properly. Depending on the location and severity of your fracture, a small finger-based splint may be appropriate to protect the fracture.

Splint care:

- Keep the splint dry and clean.
- Keep your splint away from heat.
- Avoid removing the splint unless instructed by your hand therapist.
- If you need to clean the thermoplastic splint, wash it in lukewarm water
- Monitor your fingers for signs of circulation problems, like numbness, colour change or excessive swelling and pressure sores.
- Follow your therapist's advice regarding when to begin moving your hand again.

Hand use – see chart below

- 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.
- 6 to 8 after injury: May begin gradual return to heavy gripping activities, lifting and driving without splint on.
- 12 weeks: You can return to contact sports / heavy lifting in the gym if no pain when you squeeze where fracture is on your finger.

Exercises

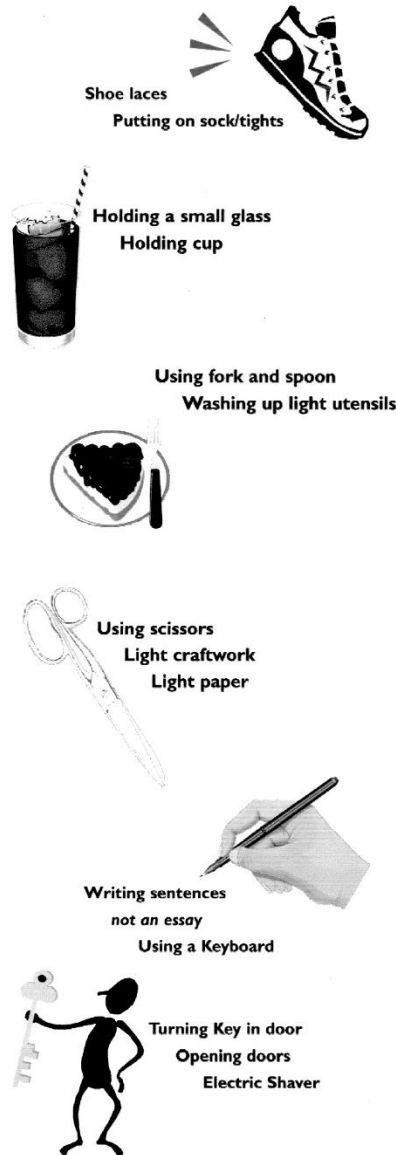
You may not be able to complete the full range of movement for these exercises at first due to pain or stiffness. Move as far as you can until you feel the stretch, but do not push further into pain. You should do 10 repetitions of each exercise, 3 to 5 times each day.



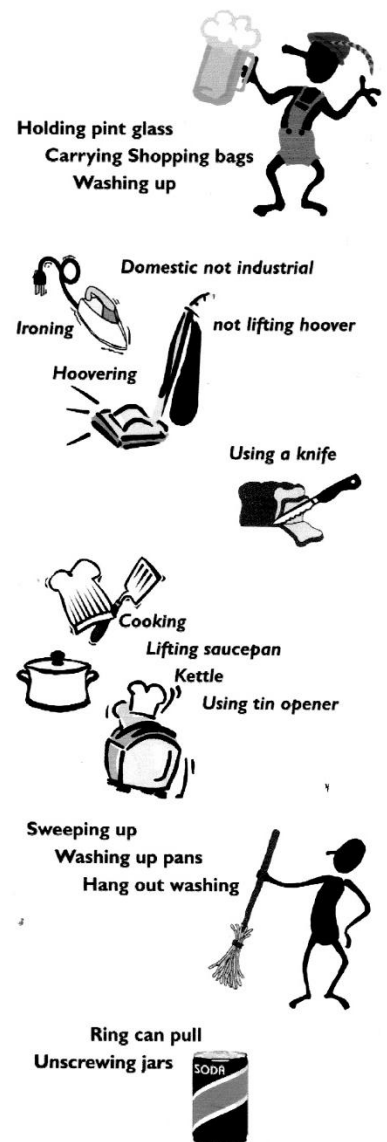
Light Activities



Medium Activities



Medium/Heavy Activities



MyChart

Our MyChart app and website lets you securely access parts of your health record with us, giving you more control over your care. To sign up or for help, call us on **020 3299 4618** or email kings.mychart@nhs.net. Visit www.kch.nhs.uk/mychart to find out more.

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.

Tel: **020 3299 4618** Email: kings.pals@nhs.net

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