

# Metacarpal 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 3 months. It may take six months 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

- **Bony Bump:** When a metacarpal fracture occurs, the bone may heal in a slightly different position than before the injury. As the fracture heals may notice a lump, due to bony callus formed from the fracture in the area.
- **Difficulty fully straightening the joint:** you may find that your fingers do not straighten completely, especially the affected finger. The finger may appear slightly bent, even when trying to extend it.
- **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.

### 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 forearm or hand-based splint may be made for you to protect your joint and promote healing.

### Splint care:

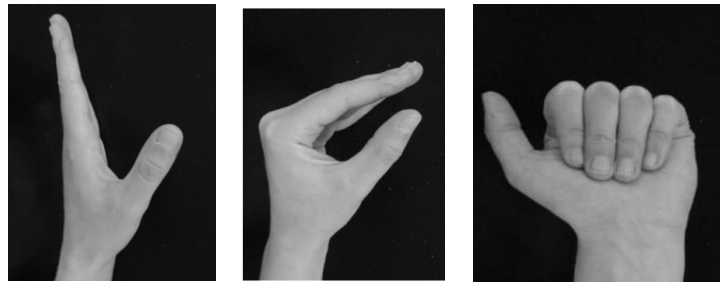
- Keep the splint dry and clean.
- Keep your splint away from heat.
- Avoid removing the splint unless instructed by your hand therapist.
- If you need to clean the thermoplastic splint, wash it in lukewarm water
- Monitor your fingers for signs of circulation problems, like numbness, colour change or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

### 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.
- You can return to contact sports / heavy lifting in the gym around 12 weeks from the injury.

## Exercises

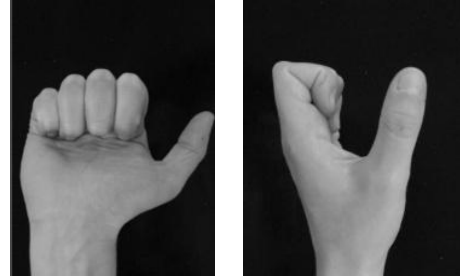
You may not be able to complete the full range of movement for these exercises at first due to pain or stiffness. Move as far as you can until you feel the stretch, but do not push further into sharp pain.



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

1. Complete this sequence of five hand movements

2. Keep your hand flat on the table try to lift your fingers up and down.

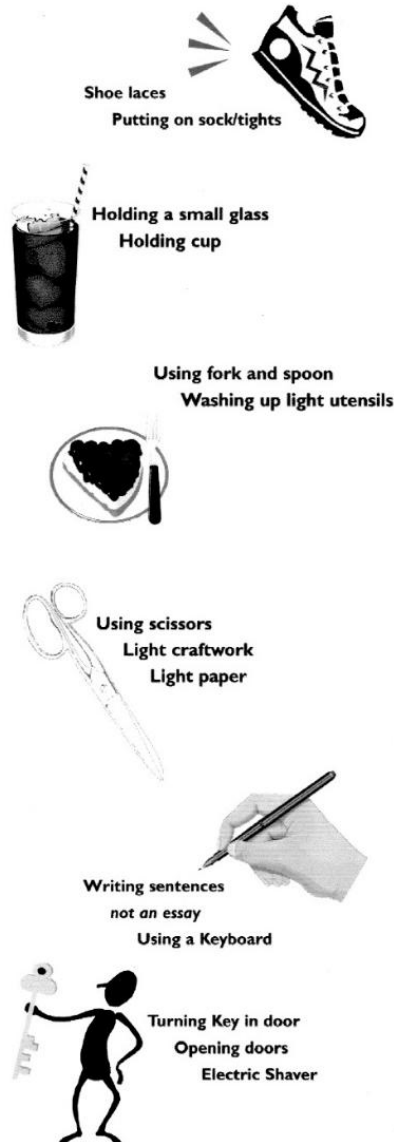


## Hand use

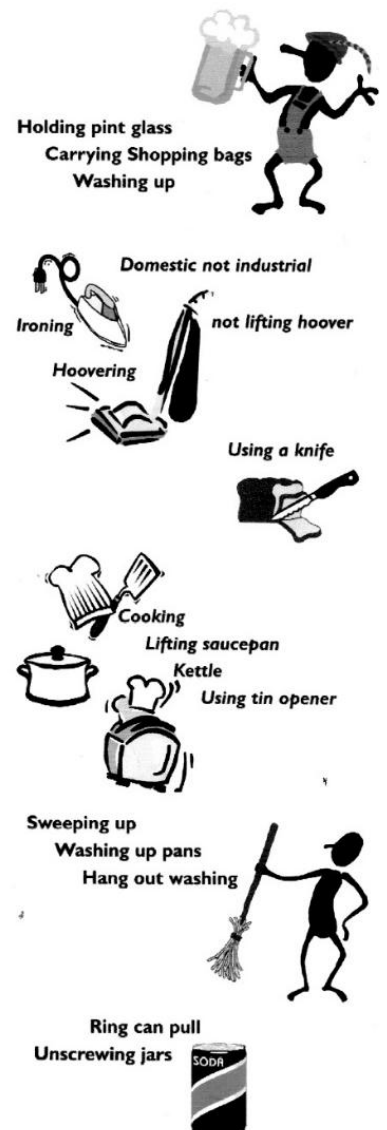
### Light Activities



### 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.

## **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](http://www.kch.nhs.uk)

## **Care provided by students**

We provide clinical training where our students get practical experience by treating patients. Please tell your doctor or nurse if you do not want students to be involved in your care. Your treatment will not be affected by your decision.

## **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**

**If you would like the information in this leaflet in a different language or format, please contact our Interpreting and Accessible Communication Support on 020 3299 4618 or email [kings.access@nhs.net](mailto:kings.access@nhs.net)**