

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 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

- **Bony Bump:** When a metacarpal fracture occurs, the bone may heal in a slightly different position than before the injury. As the fracture heals you may see extra bone (callus) in the area, making the bone feel more prominent.
- **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.

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



1. Complete this sequence of 5 hand movements

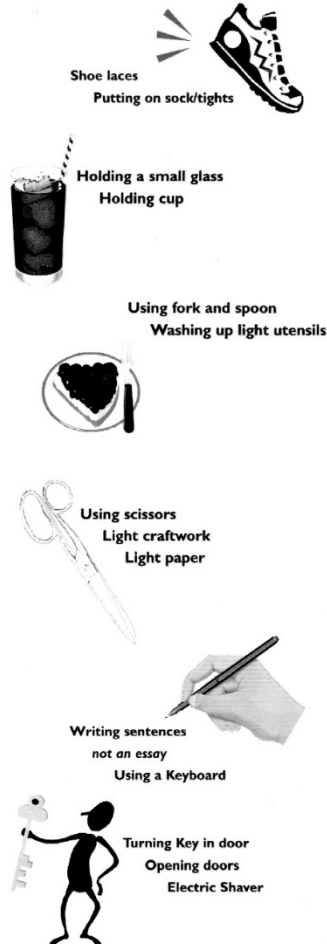
2. Keep your hand flat on the table try to lift your fingers up and down.



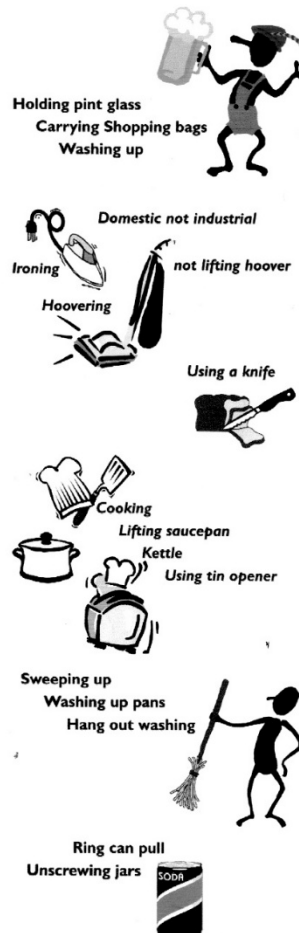
Light Activities



Medium Activities



Medium/Heavy Activities



MyChart

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

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