

Extensor tendon rehabilitation – week one to week two

Information for patients on the Merrit/ICAM regime

One or more of the tendons that straighten your fingers has been repaired. The tendon is currently very weak and is at risk of rupturing (snapping). Please carefully follow the instructions below and the advice given to you by your therapist.

It will take 12 weeks for the tendon(s) to fully heal and until you can return to normal day to day activities with your injured hand.

Splint

You need to **wear both the wrist and finger splints at all times for the next three weeks**. They are there to protect your tendon and if you remove them there is a high risk that you could snap the tendon. If one of your splints break and is not protecting your fingers you need to contact us immediately on 020 3299 8220 or 016 8986 6660 for Beckenham Beacon or email on kch-tr.kingshands@nhs.net.

Wound

- Keep the wound clean and dry.
- If you have been prescribed antibiotics, please finish the full course.
- If you notice any signs of infection such as increase in pain, redness or discolouration, swelling, a hot throbbing sensation or pus, please notify us. If outside of clinic hours, visit your GP or A&E for it to be reviewed.

Scar management (once wound has healed)

Massage the scar as instructed by your therapist – this normally starts once the stitches have been removed. This is especially important if the scar is hard and stuck and movement is restricted.

Swelling





To reduce the swelling, keep your hand raised (above the level of your heart). This can be done with the use of a sling during the day and pillows to prop up your hand while you are sleeping or sitting down.

Do	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Always keep your splints on.• Keep your wound clean and dry. You'll need to cover your hand and arm with a plastic bag when in the shower or bath.• Keep your hand raised.• Your exercises must be done every 1 to 2 hours while you are awake.
Don't	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Don't use your injured hand in function.• Don't force your fingers into the palm or wrist forwards with your other hand as this will put too much tension on the repair.• Don't drive.• Don't carry bags on the affected arm or on the wrist or forearm.

Exercises

Do all exercises slowly, gently and within the splints.

Do each exercise 10 times every 1 to 2 hours and hold for 10 seconds.

<p>1. Keep elbow and shoulder moving as normally as possible to avoid stiffness.</p>	<p>2. Straighten your thumb fully then bend it across your palm.</p>
<p>Straighten your fingers. Hold for 10 seconds</p> 	<p>Bend your big knuckles while keeping your fingers straight – into 'birdbeak position'.</p> 
<p>Bend the tips of your fingers into a hook.</p> 	<p>Attempt to make comfortable fist within your splints Do not force it.</p> 

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