Hand flexor tendon repair therapy advice

Building healthier lives

UHB is a no smoking Trust

To see all of our current patient information leaflets please visit www.uhb.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets.htm
Background
The flexor tendons run from the muscles in your forearm into the hand where they attach to the bones in your fingers and thumb (Fig1). These tendons enable you to bend your fingers and thumb. A cut in any of these tendons is a serious injury and will require regular therapy to help you regain movement after surgery.
After surgery

Your wound will be longer than your original injury to allow the surgeon to repair your tendon(s). This will have been done with special stitches both inside and outside the tendon.

After your surgery, your tendon is very weak and can break extremely easily. Your hand will require care and attention for the next three months to allow it to heal back to full strength, without the risk of it breaking.

Your hand therapist will closely supervise you. You will be provided with a splint, to protect your tendon repair, which you need to wear all the time for the next 6-7 weeks. You will be taught specific exercises to do every hour. Your co-operation is essential during your therapy and with your home exercise programme to ensure a good result from your surgery.
Exercises

**Exercise 1**
Roll down each finger separately into the palm of your hand, bending at all three joints, as shown in the diagram.

**Exercise 2**
Place the fingers of your unaffected hand in the palm of your operated hand, as shown in the diagram. In this position, bend all of your fingers and straighten to the limit of the splint.

**Exercise 3**
Place the fingers of your unaffected hand above the knuckles of your operated hand, as shown in the diagram. In this protected position, straighten all of your fingers from the middle and then relax back to the bent position.
General advice

Do

✔ Wear your splint as advised by your therapist for 6-7 weeks, your Therapist will inform you when it is safe to remove your splint

✔ Elevate your hand to control the swelling, raise your hand on two pillows when sitting or sleeping and hold it at shoulder level when walking for one to two weeks until the swelling reduces

✔ Exercise hourly when awake. Your therapist will advise you on how your exercises should be completed. It is essential that you do your exercises as they are shown

Do not

✘ Use your hand against any resistance such as picking things up. This may cause your tendon repair to break

✘ Drive until advised that this is safe for you to do so, by either your therapist or your consultant

✘ Lift or carry heavy things for 8-10 weeks from your surgery to allow your tendon to recover full strength

Be alert to any problems

• Wound care – Your stitches will be removed 10-14 days after surgery

• Infection – If your hand becomes increasingly painful, hot or looks red and swollen you may have an infection. If this is the case it is important that you contact your GP/ED

• Tendon rupture – Any sudden loss of movement with or without pain, may indicate that your repair has torn. If this is the case it is important that you seek advice immediately from your Therapist, Consultant or the Emergency Department

• Pain – This may be due to swelling or another complication, speak to your therapist or your GP if you have any concerns
Contacts

Secretaries
Janis Carpenter (Mr Titley) 0121 371 4899
Caron Musgrove (Mrs Webb, Mr Jose) 0121 371 4896
Kelly Pearce (Mr Waldram, Mr Gupta) 0121 371 4967
Debbie Sharpe (Mr Brewster, Mr Craigen) 0121 371 4969
Sarah Wilson (Mr Power, Mr Tan) 0121 371 4992
Allison Wright (Mr Chester, Mr Foster) 0121 371 4897
Jo Smith/Sarah Wilson (Mr Chaudhry, Mr Madura) 0121 371 4890

Therapy Department 0121 371 3488
Please use the space below to write down any questions you may have and bring this with you to your next appointment.
The Trust provides free monthly health talks on a variety of medical conditions and treatments. For more information visit www.uhb.nhs.uk/health-talks.htm or call 0121 371 4323.