



## South Eastern Hand Therapy

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# PIP Joint replacement Surgery



## PIP joint arthritis (Proximal interphalangeal joint)

*What is the finger PIP joint and what problems occur?*

The PIP joints are the middle joints of the fingers. They are a 'hinge' joint allowing the fingers to bend and straighten. They are very stable but are prone to stiffness and other problems like arthritis.

## Arthritis of the PIP joint

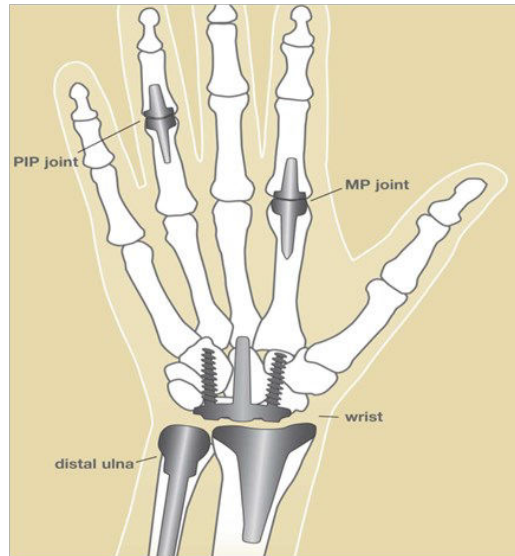
Arthritis is a condition where the articular cartilage or gliding surface of a joint becomes worn and degraded. The lining of the joint thins and may wear away leading to bone rubbing on bone. This may ultimately result in a painful and stiff joint.

## Surgical intervention

When conservative treatment is no longer effective, surgical intervention can be an option. There are many surgical options for pain relief in this area of the hand and your surgeon will discuss with you the most effective in your case.

## PIP joint replacement surgery

Joint replacement surgery involves replacing a destroyed joint with an artificial joint. The surgeon makes a cut over the back of the joint. The tendons are displaced to one side and the joint is opened up and cleaned out. The ends of the bone are removed and the medullary canal of each bone is prepared to accept the implant stem. Having inserted the implants, the range of movement is assessed along with stability. The wounds are stitched up usually with dissolvable sutures and a supportive bulky dressing is applied.



## Following surgery

The care of the finger in the post-operative period is very important in helping ensure a good result.

Usually one week following the procedure, the bulky dressings will be removed and you will be provided with a small finger splint. This will help to protect the new joint and can be removed for gentle exercises as guided by your therapist.

It is important to do the prescribed exercise regime both during the therapy sessions and at home. This will help ensure a successful result with good relief of pain and a good range of movement.



## Recovery

Recovery from this surgery is often slow. Pain and discomfort is normal. Recovery times vary and can take up to 3-6 months.

It is important to follow your surgeon and therapist's directions carefully. Excessive use or 'overdoing' it with your hand can damage the new joint.

Be sure to call your surgeon or therapist if you experience a sudden increase in pain or swelling or if your hand appears red, hot, painful or crooked.

**If you have any questions or problems, please phone your therapist on 8560 0293**

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