



South Eastern Hand Therapy

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MALLET FINGER



WHAT IS MALLET FINGER?

Mallet finger refers to a condition in which the end joint of the finger or thumb will not straighten by itself. The end joint can be pushed straight but will not hold that position on its own.

This occurs because the tendon on the back of the finger has become separated from the bone to which it is normally attached.

WHAT CAUSES IT?

Mallet finger is often caused by injury to the tendon that straightens the end joint (E.g. If the finger is forcefully pushed down).

Mallet finger often occurs after the following;

- Tendon laceration
- Tendon avulsion (tearing the tendon away from the bone)
- Finger tip fracture
- severe infection in the finger

HAND THERAPY

Your hand therapist will make a custom made thermoplastic splint that holds the fingertip straight. The earlier the splint is applied, the better chance of a good result.

Your splint must be worn continuously for at least **6 weeks** to allow the tendon to heal. It must be worn **24 hours a day** (even when showering and sleeping).

After the 6 weeks, or 8 weeks in some cases, your splint may still need to be worn for protection, depending on your rate of healing. Your splint may be temporarily removed to enable you to clean the splint or your finger. Your therapist will demonstrate the correct way to remove your splint. You must not let the fingertip drop down – even for a second – otherwise the six-week splinting period begins again.

You may return to work/activities during the six weeks however you must wear the splint at all times.

SPLINT REMOVAL

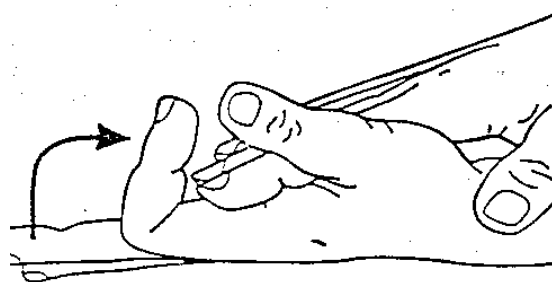
1. Place your finger on a table in the straightened position
2. Keeping your finger straight, slide the splint off
3. Clean the splint and your finger keeping your finger in the straightened position the whole time (you may require some assistance)
4. Thoroughly dry the splint and your finger
5. Carefully slide the splint back on your finger, being careful to keep the finger straight

EXERCISES

It is also important to prevent stiffness in the other joints of your fingers and hand.

Aim to complete the following exercise four times a day with the splint still on your finger.

Holding the finger straight, gently bend the middle joint of the finger (where the splint ends).



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

