

Mallet finger - no bone injury

Fracture care team [Patient information](#)

This is a follow-up letter to your recent phone call with the fracture care team. Your case has been reviewed by an Orthopaedic Consultant (Bone Specialist) and Fracture Care Physiotherapist.

You have a mallet injury to your finger or thumb. This is an injury to the tendon that straightens the end joint of your finger or thumb.

Area of your injury

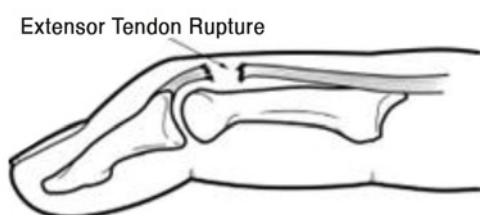


Image courtesy of www.orthoinfo.aaos.org/en/diseases--conditions/mallet-finger-baseball-finger

Healing: This normally takes about 10-12 weeks to heal.

Pain and swelling: Take pain killers as prescribed.

Using your hand: **Wear the splint all the time. See below for instruction on when to remove the splint.**

You may use the hand freely as pain allows with the splint on. It is important to keep the joints below the injury bending to stop them becoming stiff. The tape should stop before the second finger joint (see diagram below). If your splint does not fit snugly please contact us.

Follow up: You may be referred to Hand Therapy. Please contact the Hand Therapy team or the Fracture Care Team to if:

- your swelling reduces and your splint becomes too loose.
- you are unable to straighten your finger/thumb tip in the splint.
- you have ongoing pain or stiffness after coming out of the splint.
- there is still a droop at the end of your finger/thumb after removing the splint.

Mallet splint on finger:

A



You are likely to have been given one of these two types of splint (A or B). They both do the same.

B



If you are worried about following this rehabilitation plan, please contact us for advice.

If you:

- have pain other than at the site of the injury or area around it
- have questions

please get in touch. Our contact details are at the bottom of this letter.

Please follow the plan:

Weeks since injury	Plan
0-8	Wear the splint 24 hours a day ✓ You will be in a mallet splint ✓ Remove the splint once a day to wash and air the splint. You must keep your finger straight and supported on a table when you do this. ✗ Do not bend the end of your finger. ✓ Move your other fingers often. ✓ You may use your hand for light day-to-day activities. ✓ Practice exercises (see exercises to do Week 0-8).
8-10	Remove the splint during the day ✓ Use the splint at night only, unless advised otherwise. ✓ Start moving the end joint of the finger (see week 8 exercises). ✗ Avoid strong grip, heavy lifting or forced bending of the finger tip. ✗ Monitor for the end of the finger starting to droop down. If this happens, re-apply the splint and contact Hand Therapy on the number at the bottom of this letter.
10-12	✓ The injury has healed. ✓ Stop using the splint. ✓ You can begin to return to sports and other regular activities. Be guided by any pain you are experiencing. ✗ Do not force the finger to bend. ✓ Continue to monitor for a droop at the finger tip.
12	✓ If you are still having significant pain and stiffness or the finger continues to droop at the tip, contact the Hand Therapy team or the Fracture Care Team for advice.

Smoking advice:

Medical evidence suggests that smoking extends injury healing time. In extreme cases it can stop healing altogether. It is important that you think about this information with relation to your recent injury. Stopping smoking during the healing phase of your injury will help give you the best recovery.

For advice on stopping smoking and local support go to: www.livewelldorset.co.uk/stop-smoking or discuss this with your GP.

Exercises:

Initial exercises to do week 0-8

Do these exercises from the day the splint is fitted (with the splint on):



Bend and straighten your finger below the level of the splint.

The end of the finger must stay straight in the splint.

You are aiming to make a flat fist.

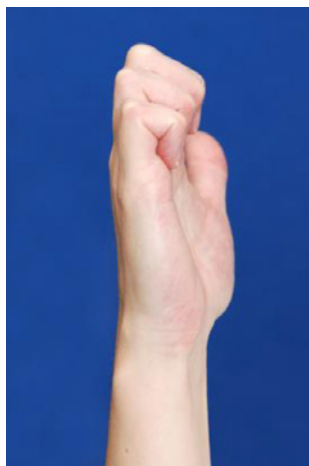
Repeat this 5 times every hour.

Make sure your other fingers stay mobile as well.

Exercises to start after week 8

Do these exercises once you have removed the splint after 8 weeks.

Expect some stiffness and discomfort. Pain may increase when you start exercising as your finger gets used to the new movement.

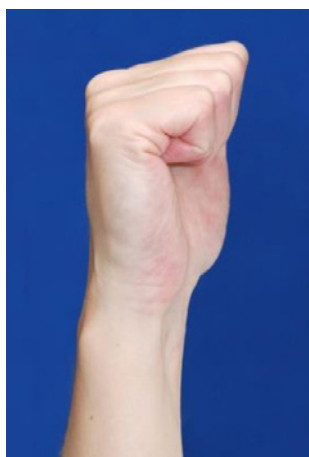


Curl the tips of your fingers over without bending the knuckles.

Do not force the movement, it should not be painful.

Do this four times.

Repeat five times a day.



Curl your fingers around to make a fist.

Do this as tightly as you can without forcing the movement or causing pain.

Do this four times.

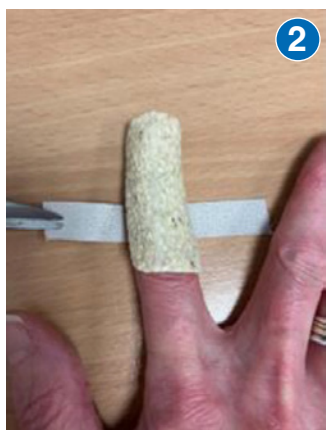
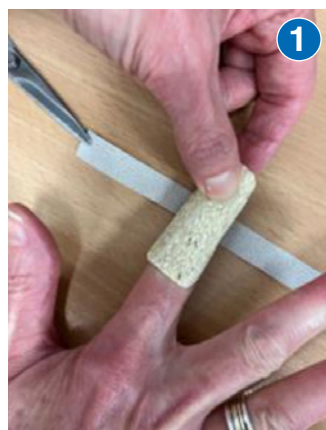
Repeat five times a day.

Removing and putting back on the splint:

If you remove the splint to clean or air the finger you must keep the joint straight like this.
Do not let the end of your finger bend. Keep the tip of the finger straight at all times.
Use the opposite hand to support the finger.

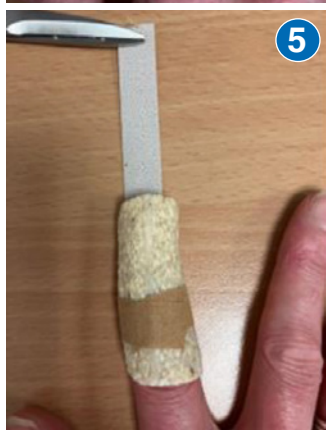
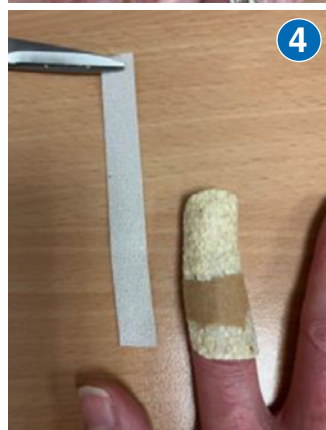
Splint A

You may find removing and replacing this splint easier if you have someone to help you.
It may help to cut the tape strips before taking the splint off.



Pictures 1-3:

Place your finger on the tape.
Place the tape just below the second finger joint.
Secure the tape over the top of the splint.



Pictures 4-6:

Place your finger on the tape.
Position the tape lengthways.
Start and finish the tape at the level of the second finger joint.
Secure the tape over the top of the splint.



Pictures 7-9:

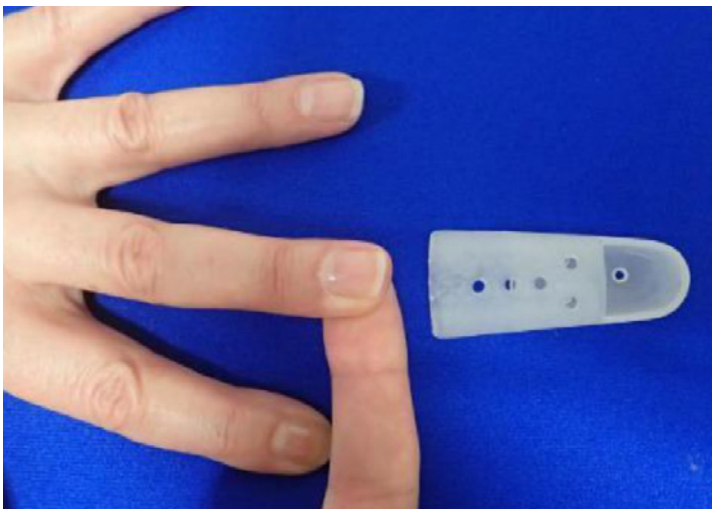
Secure a second piece of tape over the first.
Apply a further piece of tape closer to the tip of the finger.
Secure the tape over the top of the splint.



Picture 10:

To remove the splint, cut the tape at the side, next to the splint, and carefully remove the splint and tape. Keep the fingertip straight and supported.

Splint B



Removing the splint:



Putting the splint back on:



When taping the splint in place, make sure the middle finger knuckle is free to bend.

Contact details

Please contact **0300 019 2802**

(Answer machine monitored Mon-Fri, 10am-5pm)

Or e-mail: **uhd.fracturecare@nhs.net**

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