



**University
Hospitals Sussex**
NHS Foundation Trust

Mallet finger

Accident and emergency

Patient information

What is a mallet finger?

A mallet finger is a common injury that affects the tendon that straightens the end of the finger. This happens when the tendon breaks or the bone attaching the tendon breaks.

What is the treatment for a mallet finger?

You will have been provided with a splint which must be worn day and night for 6 to 8 weeks. You will be advised by Fracture Clinic or your Hand Therapist when you can remove the splint.

You will still be able to bend your finger at the middle joint.

It is important to keep the splint on all the time. If you do not wear the splint, the tendon may not heal in the correct position.

You will be followed up by Virtual Fracture Clinic or Hand Therapy. Do not bend the end of your finger until Fracture Clinic or your Hand Therapist advise you to.

What exercises should I do?

It is important to keep the rest of the hand and finger moving to stop it becoming stiff. The tape should stop before the 2nd finger joint (see below). If your splint does not fit snugly, please contact us.

Do these exercises 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).



Image of a bent finger in a splint



You should still be able to make a fist with your hand. Ensure all the other fingers can tuck right in.

Image of a fist

Can I wash my finger?

If you remove your splint to wash or air your finger, you must keep the finger straight by keeping it flat on a surface like a table. If the splint gets wet you should dry the finger and replace the splint.

How can I replace my splint?

Please follow steps 1 to 6.



1



2



3



4



5



6

Images of the 6 steps required to replace a splint

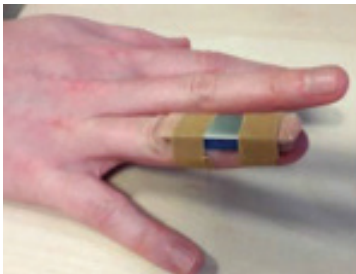
Please check the circulation of your finger once the tape is back on. If it feels numb and cold, the tape is too tight and needs to be redone.

Do not

- ✗ Try to bend the end of your finger until you are advised by Hand Clinic.
- ✗ Wear rings on your affected finger. Your finger will continue to swell for some time.
- ✗ Use the affected finger for any heavy lifting.
- ✗ Do lots of repeated gripping with the affected finger.

Do

- ✓ Keep the end joint of your finger straight.
- ✓ Keep the splint on.
- ✓ Only remove the splint to wash your hand and replace immediately.
- ✓ Elevate your hand to help with pain and reduce swelling.
- ✓ Use pain relieving medication as required: your Pharmacist or GP will be able to advise you.
- ✓ Exercises to keep the other fingers moving.



Images of a finger in a splint and a bent finger without the splint

When can I start driving again?

You can return to driving when:

- You can grip the steering wheel and have control of the vehicle.
- You have tested your ability to drive in a safe environment first.
- You have checked with your insurance company before doing so.

Who can I contact for advice?

Virtual Fracture Clinic

01273 696955 Ext. 63428

My skin is red or sore, what should I do?

If you have seen a hand specialist, please contact them directly.

If you haven't had a specialist appointment, please contact:

For general medical advice please use the NHS website, the NHS 111 service, walk-in-centres, or your GP.

NHS website www.nhs.uk/ provides online health information and guidance.

There are walk-in and urgent treatment services at Brighton Station, Crawley Urgent Treatment Centre, Lewes Victoria Hospital, Horsham Minor Injuries Unit and Bognor Regis War Memorial Hospital.

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This article is intended for patients receiving care in Brighton
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