If you have any worries or problems with your hand or splint do not hesitate to contact: -

Physiotherapy Department on 01792 703984

Occupational Therapy Department on 01792 703980

Dressing Nurse on 01792 703865

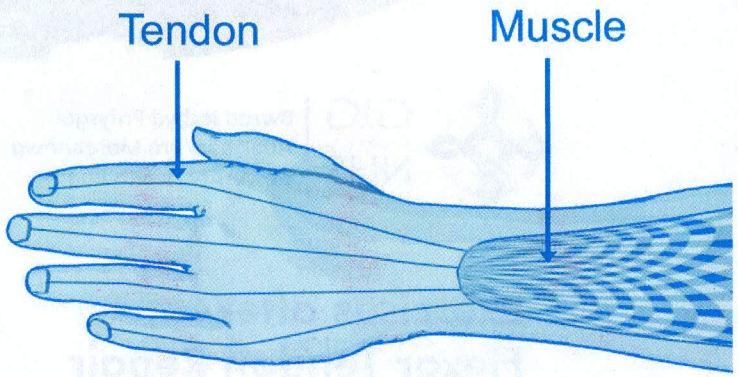
Fersiwn Gymraeg Ar Gael

GIG CYMRU NHS WALES

Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board

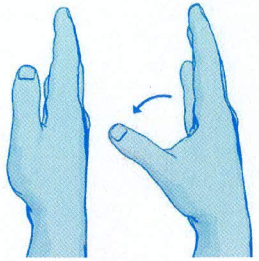
Exercises after Flexor Tendon Repair (Thumb)

Physiotherapy Department

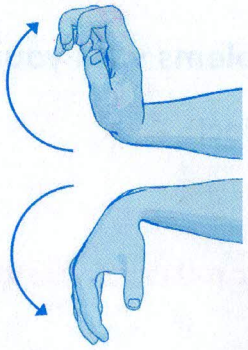


Appointments

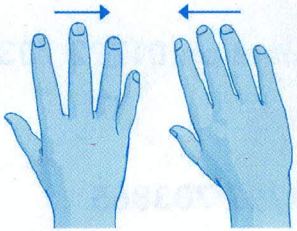
Date	Physio	O.T	Hand Therapy Clinic



Place your little finger on a table. Bring your thumb away from the palm and then back again.



Bend wrist forwards and backwards.



Lay your hand flat on table as shown. Turn your hand inward toward your Thumb as far as you can. Then turn your hand out towards your little finger

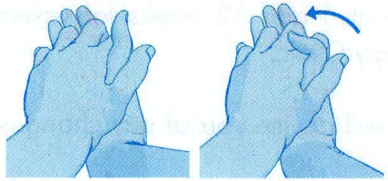
These exercises should be done every 1 – 2 hours.
You can now start to use your hand for light activities only.

It is not advisable to perform heavy lifting, stro ng gripping or contact sport for 3 months following your surgery. You should also avoid forcing the wrist and fingers backwards with the other hand for the next 2 weeks.

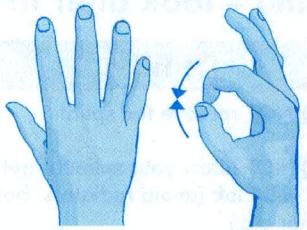
Wear the splint for protection (when you are at risk of getting your hand knocked) and at night for another 2 weeks unless instructed otherwise by your therapist.

Start these exercises only when your therapist advises you to do so Week 6 — Thumb Flexor Tendon

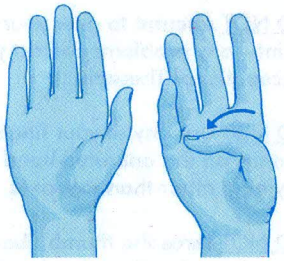
It is now 6 weeks following your hand operation. Your therapist will instruct you on the following exercises.



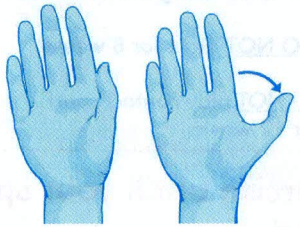
Hold thumb with your other hand as shown. Bend the tip of your thumb As shown.



Pinch thumb and first finger together. Repeat with other fingers.



Take thumb to base of little finger as shown.



Place the palm of your hand on a table. Bring your thumb away from the index finger and then back again.

What is a tendon and what does it do?

- Tendons are long strings which connect the muscles of the forearm to the bones of the fingers and thumb. Tendons take all the strain when bending your fingers to use your hand.

Why do I have to protect my repaired tendon?

- Your operation involved complex microsurgery and needs strict and skilful care.
- It takes 6 weeks for your tendon to really begin healing, during this time it is essential that you wear your splint 24 hours a day.

Why do I need to exercise my hand?

The following exercises are important to prevent tendons becoming stuck to each other and surrounding structures which can cause your thumb to become stiff.

What will happen if I do not follow the advice given?

- You may cause further damage to your tendon which could require more surgery.
- You may have problems using your hand in the future.

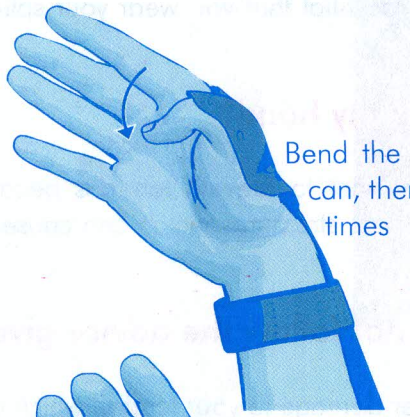
When can I go back to work?

It will take 3 months for your tendon to regain normal strength. When you return to work will depend on the type of job you do. Please ask your therapist's advice.

Exercises

These 2 exercises should be carried out every hour during the day (unless instructed otherwise).

Gently bend the tip of the operated thumb using the other hand – 5 times.



Bend the tip of the thumb as far as you can, then straighten back to the splint - 5 times

Bend the thumb across the palm towards the base of the little finger then straighten back to the splint – 5 times

Your fingers have been kept free to allow them to move.

What happens now?

- On discharge from hospital regular physiotherapy appointments will be arranged at the most convenient hospital in your local area.
- You will need to return to Morriston Hospital after 2 weeks to have stitches out and at 6 and 12 weeks for essential check ups in Hand Therapy Clinic.
- Your therapist or doctor will advise you of any changes to these appointments.
- **Remember it's your hand – look after it!**

Do's	Don't's
1. DO exercise regularly as instructed during the day (rest them completely in between)	1. DO NOT remove the splint.
2. DO keep the hand elevated to prevent swelling until wounds have healed.	2. DO NOT allow your splint to get hot – it will melt (avoid radiators, hot water etc.)
3. DO keep your splint on 24 hours a day for 6 weeks.	3. DO NOT attempt to alter your splint – any problems contact your Occupational Therapist.
4. DO keep your splint dry using a plastic bag when in the bath or shower.	4. DO NOT use any of your fingers or thumbs on the operated hand for anything other than exercises.
5. DO stop or cut down smoking. This will help with healing.	5. DO NOT force the thumb back to the splint using the other hand.
	6. DO NOT drive for 8 weeks.
	7. DO NOT play contact sport for 12 weeks

Do not start the following exercise untill your splint is removed