



REHABILITATION

# Extensor Tendon Injuries Zone III and IV

*(Central slip injuries,  
conservative management)*

*One of the tendons that  
straighten your finger  
has been injured.*

It will take at least 6 weeks for your tendon to heal and at least 12 weeks until it is strong enough for you to return to unlimited activities.

Progress from this injury varies from person to person and you must be guided by your therapist. These pages provide a guide for an average rehabilitation regime.

*Week 0 – 2 after injury  
(moving onto the next  
stage will be assessed by  
your therapist).*

You will have a gutter splint (see picture) made to fit you by your hand therapist.

This protects the healing tendon of your finger. Pay close attention to how the splint is applied, attention to detail makes all the difference to the final results.



*Splint 1 - The Gutter Splint*

*You need to wear this  
continuously for at least  
six weeks after your  
injury.*

*Change into splint  
number 2 to do your  
exercises.*

*Exercising the end joint of  
the finger*

Carefully remove splint 1 and place splint 2 on the front of your injured finger, as shown. Be sure you place the splint so that you can see the skin crease of the end joint.

Now hold down the middle joint with your uninjured hand while actively trying to bend the top joint of the injured finger. Then straighten the end joint.



*Splint 2*

*Repeat 10 times every  
2 hours in the day.  
Bend, Hold, Straighten.*

*Week 2 – 5 after injury*

You will continue to wear the **gutter splint** all the time when you are not using your exercise splints.

In addition, you will start regular exercises using two more specially made splints:

*Exercising both finger joints*

Carefully remove splint 2, Place splint 3 on the front of the injured finger, at its base, as shown. Hold the splint, at the base of the finger with your other hand. Carefully bend the injured finger to the angle of the splint, aiming to lightly touch the splint with your finger tip. Then straighten the finger, as shown.

*The bend of your exercise  
splint (Splint 3) will steadily  
be increased by your  
therapist.*



*Splint 3*





## REHABILITATION

### *Exercising the base joint of the finger*

Carefully remove splint 3 and put splint 1 back on. Now aim to keep your fingers straight yet bend at the base so as to make a 'table top', as shown.

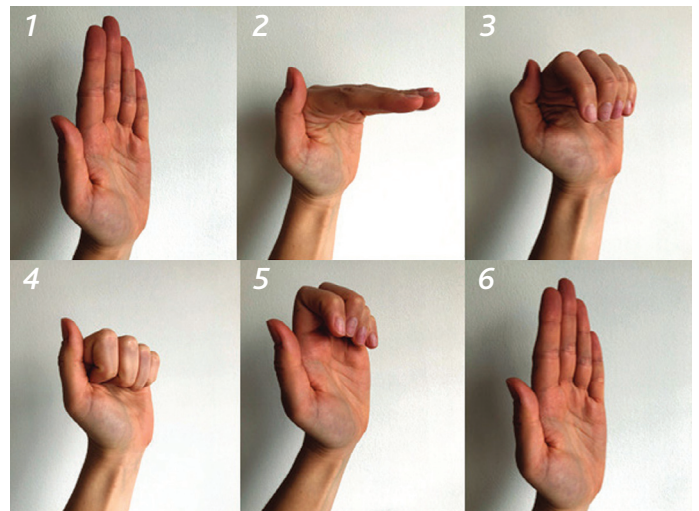
*Complete each of these  
exercises 10 times each hour*



### *Week 5 – 6 after injury*

### *Continue to use Splint 1 when you are not doing your exercises, as before.*

Carefully remove splint 1 and complete the following exercises. Run smoothly through the sequence of exercises below. These glide your tendons and help them to run more normally again.



### *Week 6 – 12 after injury*

You will continue to use splint 1 at night and for protection in crowded areas, at week 8 you can discontinue your splint. Your tendon has now healed

enough to cope with normal daily activities but your hand will feel weak.

During this stage of your rehabilitation you will continue

to work on regaining a full range of motion, if you have not achieved this yet. You will also start on gradually strengthening your hand and tendon.

### **DO'S**

- Be patient, the effort you put into your rehabilitation is significantly related to the end result obtained from your repaired tendon
- Do keep your arm/hand elevated to minimise swelling, particularly soon after your injury
- Do wear your splints as prescribed
- Do follow the therapist recommendations
- Do keep all your uninjured joints moving, including your shoulder and elbow

### **DON'TS**

- Don't leave your hand out of the splints
- Don't try to push hard against the splints when completing exercises
- Don't use your injured hand to forcefully grip objects
- Don't drive until you have discussed this with your therapist