



REHABILITATION

Thumb base surgery

You have had surgery to treat the arthritis/instability at the bottom of your thumb.

It will take you sometime to regain full function of your thumb.

Progress from this surgery varies from person to person and you must be guided by your therapist.

These pages provide a guide for an average rehabilitation regime.

Remember the effort you put into your rehabilitation is significantly related to the end result obtained from your operation.

Week 0 – 2 after surgery

Your thumb will be supported in a bandage and plaster cast from theatre.

You should keep all the joints that are not within the support as mobile as possible, including your elbow and shoulder. Work particularly on the end joint of the thumb and all your fingers.



Finger flexion and Thumb flexion, in plaster



Finger extension and thumb extension, in plaster

Week 2 - 4

Complete the following set of exercises 10 times each every 2 hours during the day:

Between 2 and 4 weeks after your surgery you will see the hand therapists to have removable splint made. This replaces the bandage and plaster put on in theatre and should be worn all the time except for scar massage.



Scar massage

Apply deep circular massage with firm pressure 5 times daily for 5 minutes to the scar and surrounding area.

You may use a non-scented moisturiser to help with this and to soften the skin.



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Week 4 - 6

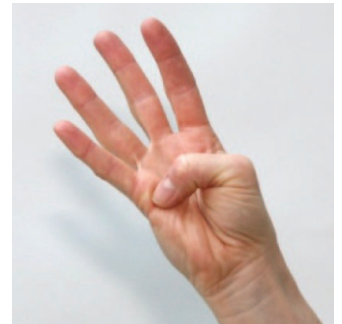
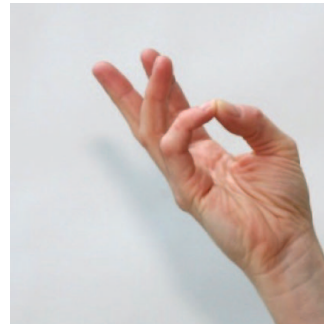
Stop wearing the splint during the day when at home. Continue to use it at night and for protection in crowded areas

You should do the following exercises 10 times every 2 hours during the day:

Opposition

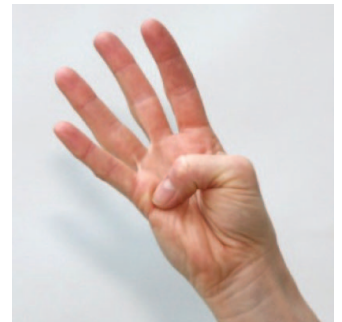
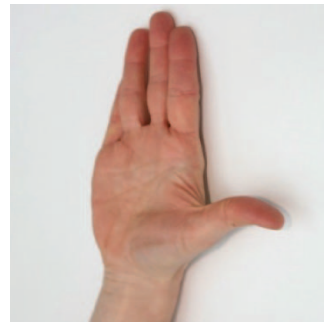
Touch the tip of each finger in turn with the tip of the thumb. Start off with touching the tip of the index finger.

Once you have reached the tip of your little finger, try running your thumb down to the base of your little finger.



Flexion/Extension

Bend the thumb backwards and forward across the palm, as shown in the picture.



Week 6 – 12

You can now stop using your splint.

Increase use of your hand with slightly heavier activities, as pain allows.

Your therapist will work with you on increasing your range of motion and strengthening exercises. Continue to massage your scar.

Most people can get back to driving by the end of the eighth week but you should not do any contact sports or heavy lifting until the end of the twelfth week after surgery.