



REHABILITATION

Thumb Short Extensors Repair

(Extensor Pollicis Brevis and
Abductor Pollicis Longus repair,
intact Extensor Pollicis Longus)

You have injured the short tendons on the back of your thumb (Extensor Pollicis Brevis and Abductor Pollicis Longus).

These have been repaired but it will take at least 12 weeks until they are 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 to 4 after surgery

Your tendon repair requires splinting ALL the time for the first 4 weeks after your surgery except for exercise.

You will have a removable splint made to fit you by your hand therapist on your first appointment. This replaces the plaster applied in theatre. This splint protects the healing tendons of your thumb.



Every 2 hours during the day you should practice these exercises:

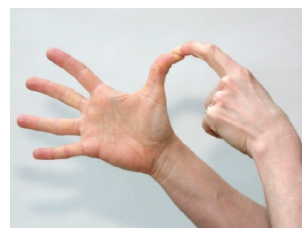
Remove the splint and hold the base of the thumb as shown. Bend the thumb down towards your palm and hold for 10 seconds. Straighten the thumb out and hold for 10 seconds.

Repeat 10 times



Lift the thumb up with your other hand, as shown. Take away your other hand and try and hold the thumb up for 10 seconds and then relax.

Repeat 10 times





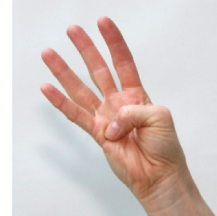
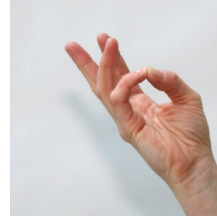
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Week 4 – 6 after surgery

Continue to wear the splint at night and if you are out in a busy environment e.g. the pub.

You may now begin to remove your splint for light activities during the day. Light activities include turning pages, eating, folding light laundry, tying a shoe, buttoning and typing. Ask your Hand Therapist when you may begin specific activities if you are in doubt.

At least 4 to 5 times a day run the thumb through a full set of movements - touch the tips of all the fingers with the tip of your thumb. Then try and run the thumb down to the base of your little finger. Finish by straightening the thumb out as far as you can.



Week 6 - 12 after surgery

Your tendon has now healed enough to cope with normal daily activities but your thumb and hand will feel weak.

During this last six weeks of your rehabilitation, you will continue to work on regaining full range of motion, if you have not achieved this yet. You will also start gradually strengthening your thumb. Most people can return to unlimited activities at the end of this six weeks.

DO NOT DO ANY CONTACT SPORTS (e.g. rugby) OR HEAVY LIFTING until the end of this period of time, i.e. until 12 weeks after your surgery.

DO'S

- Do keep your arm/hand elevated to minimise swelling, particularly soon after your surgery
- Do wear your splint as prescribed
- Do follow the therapist recommendations
- Do keep all your uninjured joints moving, including your shoulder, elbow, the fingers of your injured hand and the end joint of the thumb.
- Do massage your scar (once healed) with moisturiser as demonstrated by your therapist
- Do contact your therapist immediately if your splint or straps break for it to be mended

DON'TS

- Don't leave your hand out of the splint in the first 4 weeks
- Don't force the thumb across the palm
- Don't drive until you have discussed this with your therapist