



REHABILITATION

Ulnar Collateral Ligament Repair/ Reconstruction

You have had surgery to repair/reconstruct the ulnar collateral ligament of your thumb metacarpophalangeal joint.

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:

Your plaster will be removed and you will be provided with a splint that you should wear all the time, except for scar massage.

Bend the end joint of your thumb up and down in the splint. Keep your fingers moving.





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Touch the tip of your thumb to the tip of each finger in turn.



Move your wrist up and down



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.

Week 4 – 6

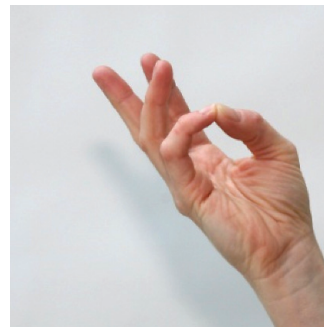
Stop wearing the splint during the day when at home. Continue to use it at night and for protection in crowded areas.

You can stop wearing your splint completely from week 6 post your surgery.

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

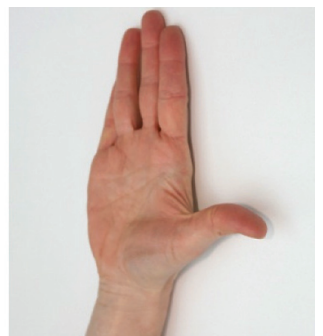
Opposition

Touch the tip of each finger with the tip of the thumb, starting with the index finger.



Flexion/Extension

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



Week 6 – 12

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.