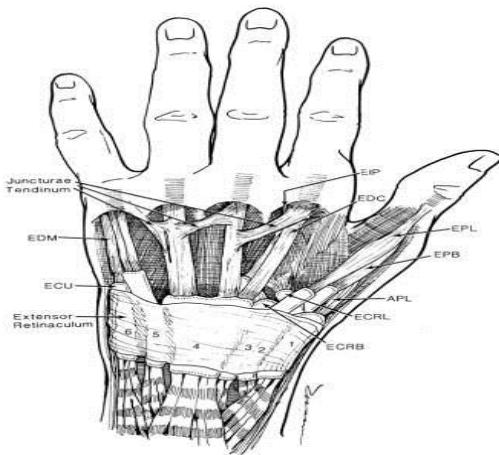




Extensor Tendon Repair

Anatomy and function of extensor tendons



Your extensor tendons enable you to straighten your fingers. They attach the muscle belly, which is in the forearm, to the bones in the fingers. Your injury particularly affects the tendon that straightens the joint at the main knuckle, between your hand and fingers.

Your injury and surgery

You have had an injury to 1 or 2 of your extensor tendons on the back of your hand, between your knuckles and your wrist. You may have also injured other structures in the area. Your hand therapist will discuss your individual injury with you. The injured tendon has been repaired in surgery. The two ends of the tendon have been stitched back together, enabling you to start moving your fingers under the guidance of hand therapy. However, the tendon will not be fully healed until 12 weeks from the injury.

Why do I need to come for hand therapy?

Now that the surgeons have repaired your tendon(s), it is important to protect it whilst it is healing. Your hand therapist will replace the plaster of paris backslab with a custom made plastic splint that you will wear for up to 6 weeks after your surgery. It is important to start exercises within your splint soon after the operation. This helps to avoid joint stiffness, promotes healing and improves active movement in your finger/thumb. If you were only given a splint and did not exercise you would end up with a stiff finger that did not work well in function.



You will have 2 splints-

- The wrist splint to prevent the wrist bending forward and stretching the repaired tendon
- The yoke splint around your fingers to prevent the knuckles bending fully and stretching the repaired tendon

Your splints must be worn 24 hours per day for the first 3 weeks. You will need to wear the finger part of the splint for a further 2 weeks. Your hand therapist will instruct you when you can take them off. You risk re-injury to your tendon if you remove the splints against advice.





Activities you can do in your splints

Wearing the splints, you can use your hand for light activities, for example:

- Doing up buttons
- Doing up shoelaces
- Holding a paper
- Using your mobile phone



You **must not** use your hand for heavier activities, for example:

- Carrying a cup of tea
- Carrying a plate of food
- Pulling up jeans
- Opening doors
- Contact sports
- Driving



Approximate Timescales for Returning to Activity

- ☒ Driving – 8-10 weeks
- ☒ Cycling – 8-10 weeks
- ☒ Contact sports/heavy lifting – 12 weeks

Please discuss specific activities with your therapist as every injury and person is individual.

Potential Complications

- ☒ Rupture of the tendon repairs
- ☒ Infection/delayed wound healing
- ☒ Hypertrophic/keloid/hypersensitive scarring
- ☒ Prolonged swelling/thickening of the finger
- ☒ Stiffness in the finger
- ☒ Cold intolerance
- ☒ Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS)

