

The extensor tendons lie on the back of your hand and connect muscles in your forearm to each of your fingers. When these muscles tighten they pull through the tendons and stretch your fingers into the straight position. If these tendons are cut you will still be able to grip tightly but will have difficulty opening your fingers to let go or to open them widely to stretch round larger objects that you want to pick up. Cut tendons do not heal without surgery.

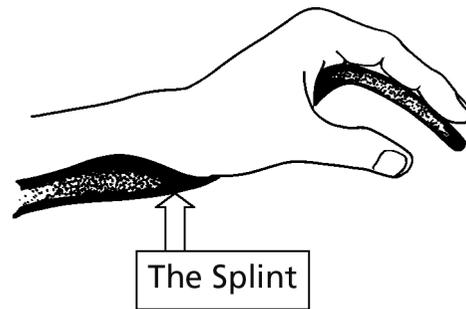
It is important that they are repaired in order to regain good use of your hand.

The Operation:

- The operation is performed under general anaesthesia; in other words, you will be asleep.
- When a tendon is cut the ends pull apart. To find the ends we often have to enlarge the skin wound.
- Your injured tendon(s) will be repaired with small strong stitches.
- At the end of the operation a splint will be put on your hand and forearm to protect your tendon while it heals. It is very important to wear this.
- It is likely that you will be able to leave hospital a few hours after surgery.

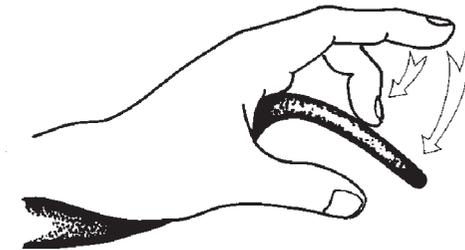
After Your Operation:

Pain: is usually relieved by simple painkillers, which we will provide. It settles in the first week, but mild tenderness may persist for several weeks.



Stitches: will be removed in Clinic about 10 days after surgery. Please keep your dressings dry.

Physiotherapy: surgery is only the first step. A good result also depends on correct use of your splint and on how well you do your exercises. The Physiotherapist will see you soon after your operation to show you the correct way to exercise your fingers. This is important to prevent your fingers becoming stiff and to encourage good healing of the tendon without straining it.



Recovery: your tendon(s) will not be strong enough for light every day activities until 4 weeks after surgery. Please wear your splint at all times for 4 weeks.

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strenuous activity eg: manual work, contact sport.

How much movement will I get?

It is usually possible to recover full movement after injury to the extensor tendons. Sometimes movement of the finger is disappointing. This is most likely to happen if your injury was particularly severe or if you do not exercise correctly.

What can go wrong?

Feeling of tendon rupture: occasionally the stitches fail before the tendon has fully healed. The tendon comes apart and must be repaired again. The risk of rupture is much greater if you remove your splint prematurely. There is usually a something snapping or giving way. It is not an emergency but if you think this may have happened please contact your Physiotherapist as soon as possible during normal working hours. Her telephone number is 0151 604 7045. She will examine your hand and if the tendon repair has failed we will usually offer to re-operate within a week.

Stuck tendon: as the tendon heals, the cut ends may not only 'stick' to each other but also to other parts of your finger. It is to prevent this that we ask you to exercise the finger from the beginning. Occasionally this fails and the tendon becomes stuck so badly that it either cannot straighten the finger properly or holds it in the straight position and will not let it bend. If this happens and doesn't improve

with physiotherapy it may be helped by an operation to release the adhesions by which the tendon has become stuck to other parts.

Infection occurs after 1-2% of operations. It should be suspected if pain and swelling increase a few days after the operation. In this case please phone the Fracture Clinic at Arrowe Park Hospital

0151 604 7069
between
9 and 11am Mon – Fri
or contact your GP
outside of these hours.

What you can do to get a good result:

1. Do not remove your splint
2. Keep appointments with your Physiotherapist.
3. Exercise in the way she teaches you every hour.
4. Keep your hand out of water.
5. Do not drive or do anything else with your hand without first checking with us that it is safe.
6. 'Phone your physiotherapist if you are worried.

Hand Physiotherapists :

The hand physiotherapy team can be contacted for advice on the following number:

Direct Line:
0151 604 7045

This leaflet is available in large print, Braille and on tape.
Please contact Geoff Pennock on 0151 604 7289.



Wirral University Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust operates a No Smoking Policy. Please refrain from smoking on site.

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Surgery For Cut Extensor Tendons

Information for Patients

Fracture & Orthopaedic Clinic Arrowe Park Hospital

