

Extensor tendon injury: Exercises after surgery

Early Active Mobilisation (Norfolk) Protocol

Stage 1

Occupational Therapy & Physiotherapy

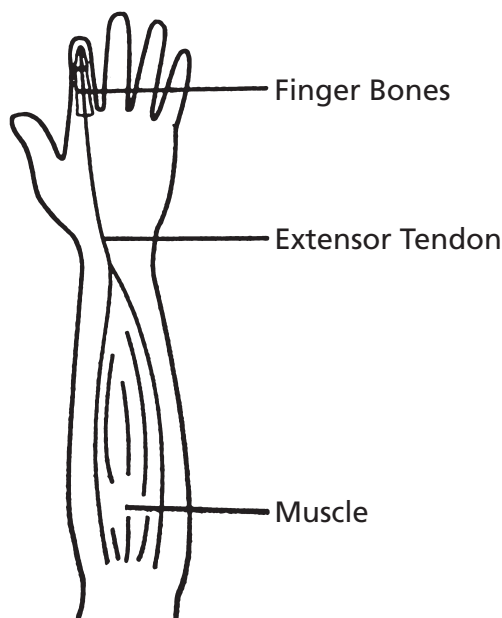
Who is this leaflet for?

This leaflet is for patients who have had surgery to repair extensor tendons in their arm. It explains what the tendons do, why they are important and what you will need to do to help your recovery.

What do the extensor tendons do?

The extensor tendons lie just beneath the skin on the back of your hand. One end attaches to the bone in your finger and the other end attaches to a muscle in your forearm.

When the muscle tightens, it pulls on the tendon which straightens your finger/s. To work properly, the tendon must glide smoothly under the skin.



The prevention of infection is a major priority in all healthcare and everyone has a part to play.

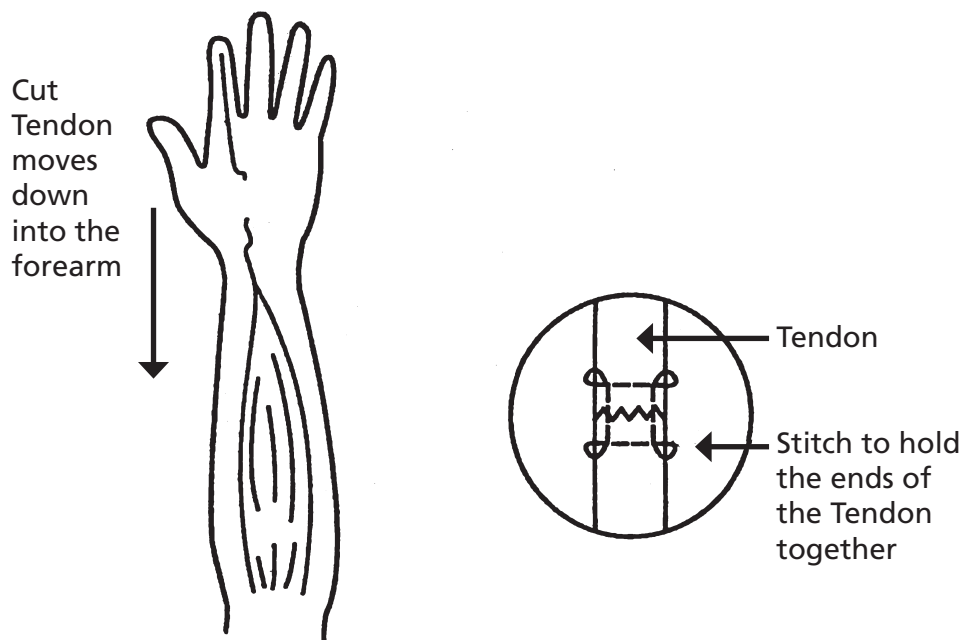
- Please decontaminate your hands frequently for 20 seconds using soap and water or alcohol gel if available
- If you have symptoms of diarrhoea and/or vomiting, cough or other respiratory symptoms, a temperature or any loss of taste or smell please do not visit the hospital or any other care facility and seek advice from 111
- Keep the environment clean and tidy
- Let's work together to keep infections out of our hospitals and care homes.

Why is an extensor tendon injury a serious problem?

Extensor tendons are important to hand function. If you damage one or more of the tendons you will not be able to straighten the fingers.

How are the tendons repaired?

If the tendon is cut or spontaneously ruptures, then the ends move apart from each other. An operation is needed to repair the tendon by bringing the cut ends together and securing them with a stitch.



What might affect the healing of the tendon after surgery?

There are two main risks which might delay or limit healing:

1. **Breaking the repair:** The stitch holding the tendon is very delicate and until the tendon has had sufficient time to heal, the repair will be at risk of breaking.
2. **The tendon becoming 'stuck':** The tendon heals by making scar tissue which acts like glue. If the tendon is kept still, the scar tissue can stick to nearby bones and skin, and the tendon will not be able to glide and thereby move the finger.

How can I avoid these risks?

Initially your hand will be rested in a plaster or plastic splint. This will stop you making a full fist or putting too much tension on the repair; it is very important that you do not remove the splint. It must be worn day and night for the first four weeks after your surgery.

At the same time, you must start to move the fingers so that the tendon is allowed to glide; this should stop the tendon sticking. The exercises on the next page will show you how to do this.

Are there any precautions or side effects for these exercises?

Your surgeon and your therapist have assessed you as being suitable to carry out these exercises, and it is unlikely that they will cause any adverse effect. However, if you experience:

- Discomfort or rubbing from the splint
- Sudden pain
- Loss of movement.

Please speak to your therapist as soon as possible.

Do not remove the splint unless instructed to do so.

Exercises – Stage 1

Do the following exercises 5 times, every 4 hours.

Do not remove the splint to do the exercises.

Number 1:



Straighten all your fingers as much as possible. If necessary, help the fingers to straighten with your other hand, then let go and try to keep the fingers straight for a few seconds. Relax the fingers back onto the splint.

Number 2:



Bend the top two joints of your fingers as far as you can within the splint. Hold the position for a few seconds.

Also:

- Lift your arm above your head regularly
- Bend and straighten your elbow regularly
- Keep your arm raised above heart level when not performing your exercises, for example, when resting.

Who can I contact if I have any concerns or questions?

If you have concerns or queries about any aspect of this advice, please speak to the therapist in charge of your care.

Name of therapist:.....

Contact telephone number:.....

Out of hours / emergency contact details:.....

.....

English

If you need information in another way like easy read or a different language please let us know.

If you need an interpreter or assistance please let us know.

Lithuanian

Jeigu norėtumėte, kad informacija jums būtų pateikta kitu būdu, pavyzdžiui, supaprastinta forma ar kita kalba, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Jeigu jums reikia vertėjo ar kitos pagalbos, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Polish

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo otrzymać te informacje w innej postaci, na przykład w wersji łatwej do czytania lub w innym języku, prosimy powiedzieć nam o tym.

Prosimy poinformować nas również, jeżeli potrzebowaliby Państwo usługi tłumaczenia ustnego lub innej pomocy.

Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਵਿਚ ਆਸਾਨ ਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੂਜੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ, ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਦੁਭਾਸ਼ੀਏ ਦੀ ਜਾਂ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

Romanian

Dacă aveți nevoie de informații în alt format, ca de exemplu caractere ușor de citit sau altă limbă, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Dacă aveți nevoie de un interpret sau de asistență, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Traditional Chinese

如果您需要以其他方式了解信息，如易读或其他语种，请告诉我们。

如果您需要口译人员或帮助，请告诉我们。