

HOW TO MANAGE YOUR TRIGGER FINGER



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Overview

The key is to manage your activities and lifestyle; avoid "triggering" of your finger(s)

Trigger finger is a form of repetitive stress injury; it is often a result of repetitive use of your hands during tasks. Having trigger finger can greatly affect your daily activities or work. It requires attention and patience when managing it. These symptoms tend to improve with rest, though they may recur with resumption of activities. If you do not take special care, the trigger finger may progress to causing pain and frequent catching or locking of your finger which may then lead to anxiety.

Adjusting how you perform your activities can greatly reduce the trigger finger symptoms. Be mindful about how you perform your daily activities by avoiding any "triggering" of your finger(s). Depending on the severity of your trigger finger, your occupational therapist will advise you on the management of the trigger finger accordingly.

How To Manage Your Trigger Finger



WRITE HERE:

Your Name:

Your Occupational Therapist:

Location of pain:

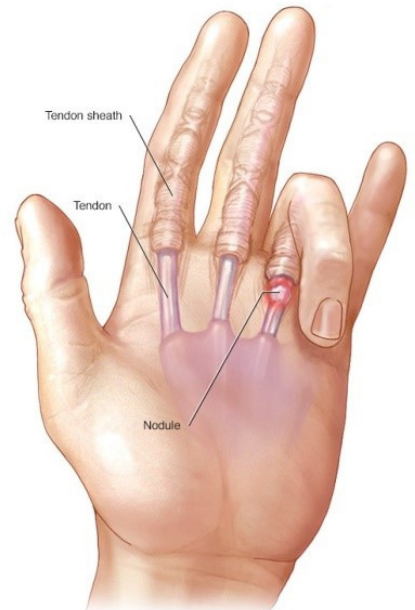
Intensity of pain:

Activities that aggravate the pain:

Strategies tried so far:

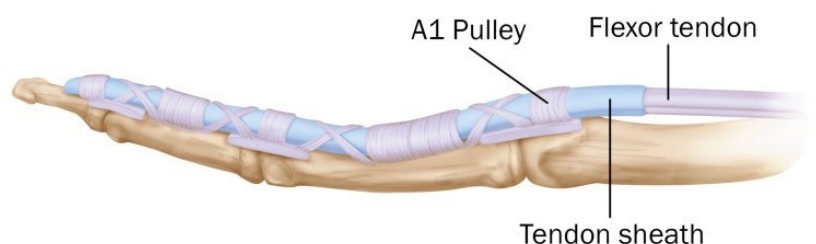
What is Trigger Finger?

- Trigger finger is also known as *Stenosing Tenosynovitis*.
- It is a condition where you may experience a locking of your thumb or finger(s) when you try to bend or straighten them.
- For some, trigger finger may be painful. For some it might not be.
- You may feel a “bump” in your palm where the inflamed nodule is.







Why does Trigger Finger happen?

- The tendons in your fingers work like long ropes connecting muscles of your forearm with the bones of the fingers and thumb.
- In the finger, the pulleys form a tunnel (sheath) to “hold” the tendons close against the bone, beneath which the tendons glide during movement.
- Trigger finger develops when the tendon swells, causing a nodule or swelling of its lining. It must squeeze through the opening of the tunnel.
- Over time, the inflammation worsens, resulting in pain, locking and difficulty to move the fingers.



Stages of Trigger Finger (Green's Classification)

Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4
			
Palm pain	Catching present	Locking present, still correctable	Fixed in position

Causes of Trigger Finger

The cause of trigger finger is often unclear, although it may be due to these reasons:

- Side effects from cancer treatment (e.g. hormonal therapy)
- Other medical conditions such as diabetes
- Overuse or repetitive movements



How To Manage Your Trigger Finger

Management of Trigger Finger

Splinting:

- Wear splint as instructed by your therapist (e.g. daytime use, night time use or use with activity)



Ice:

- Apply cold ice pack onto the trigger site for 10 – 15 minutes to reduce pain, inflammation or swelling
- Frequency: 2 – 4 times per day

Heat:

- Apply hot pack onto the trigger site for 10 – 15 minutes to reduce pain or stiffness
- Frequency: 2 – 4 times per day



Contrast Bath:

- Alternate 1 minute between hot and cold temperature using water bath for 10 minutes
- Frequency: 2 – 4 times per day



Things To Do

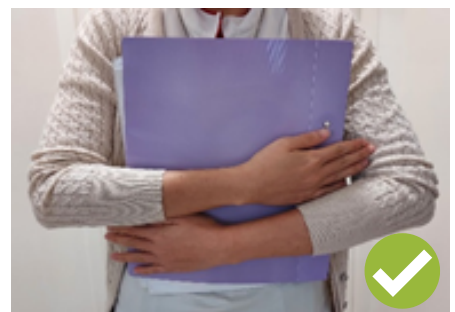


Avoid aggravating actions

- Avoid tasks that require heavy or prolonged pinching or gripping (e.g. carrying heavy items or holding a steering wheel). Avoid repetitive gripping tasks as well.
- Avoid wringing (such as hand-washing of clothes).
- Avoid too much pressure in the palm (such as carrying bags or using a walking stick). Pad the area if required.
- In general, be mindful and avoid any activities that will trigger the “lock or catch”.

Practice good ergonomics when doing activities

Avoid carrying heavy objects. If you need to, bring the object closer to your body and use the larger joints such as your elbow or shoulder to help you. Use two hands to carry and spread the load over several joints.

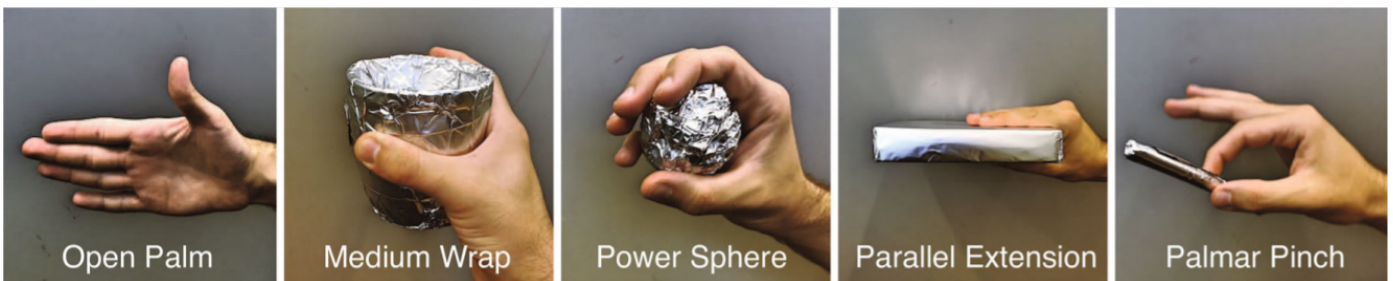


Things To Do



Practice good ergonomics when doing activities

Modify your grip or use built-up handles for objects to avoid full gripping during activities.



Source: <https://arxiv.org/ftp/arxiv/papers/2103/2103.04845.pdf>

Rest your hand if it is painful. Your doctor or occupational therapist may recommend that you get a splint.

See a doctor if your condition worsens

Speak to your doctor if the condition still does not improve. Your doctor may suggest the following:

- Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs)
- Glucocorticoid injection
- Surgical release



Things To Do



Exercises









Exercises are important for healing and reducing stiffness in your hand. They can be found in the next page of this leaflet. You will be taught to perform these exercises by your occupational therapist:

- Tendon Gliding Exercises: Ensuring smooth gliding of your tendons allows you to move your fingers freely.
- Place and Hold Exercise: This prevents stiffness of the affected finger.
- Wrist Stretch and Forearm Massage: This will help to relieve the tight forearm muscles that are connected to your finger tendons.

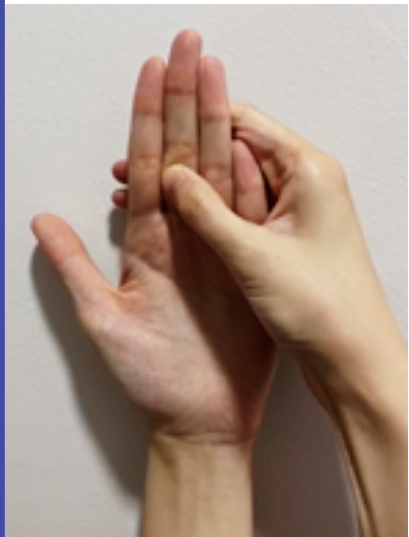



Here are some points to take note when doing the exercises:

- Make sure you are comfortably seated when performing the exercises.
- Start the exercise with your hand in a straight neutral position, then follow the image as shown in the leaflet.
- Do only the exercises as instructed. Avoid doing more than required as it may cause more inflammation.
- Do the exercises slowly instead of performing them quickly as this is more effective.

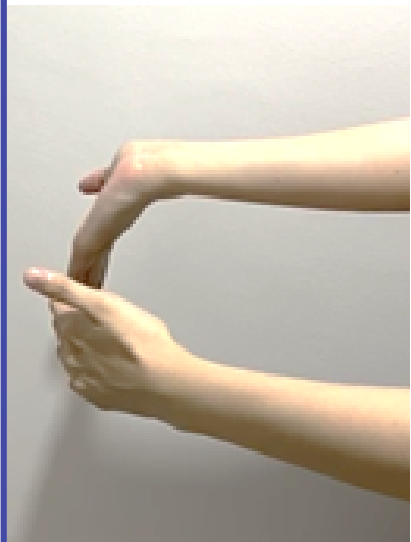

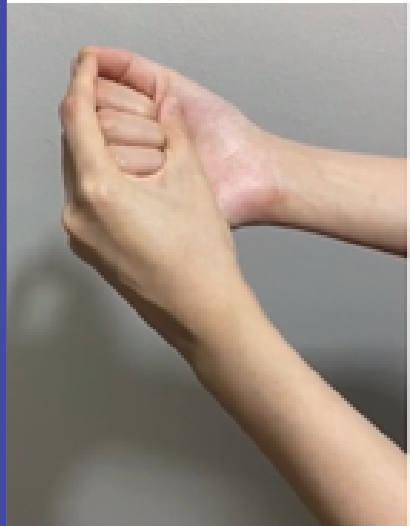

Tendon Gliding Exercises

Exercise	Description
	 Tabletop Make a “table-top” position as shown. Bend only at the knuckles.
	 Hook Fist Make a hook fist as shown.
	 Straight Fist Touch your palm while keeping your end joints straight
	 Full Fist Make a complete fist as shown.

Hand Massages

Exercise	Description
 	<p>Tendon Massage</p> <p>Massage your finger along your tendon in a perpendicular direction. You do not need any lotion or massage oil for this massage.</p> <p>Duration: 5 - 10 minutes Perform as needed throughout the day</p>
 	<p>Forearm Massage</p> <p>With your palm facing up, massage the muscle bulk located in your forearm using your unaffected hand. You may use lotion or massage oil for this massage.</p> <p>Duration: 5 - 10 minutes Perform as needed throughout the day</p>

Other Exercises

Exercise	Description
 	<p>Wrist Stretch</p> <p>Bend your wrist backwards and hold in the position as shown using your unaffected hand.</p> <p>Hold for 30 seconds 2 - 3 repetitions 2 - 3 times per day</p>
 	<p>Passive Bending & Hold Full Fist</p> <p>Perform “place and hold” full fist exercise by using your unaffected hand to assist. Then open the hand using your unaffected hand.</p> <p>Hold for 5 - 10 seconds 10 repetitions x 2 - 3 sets per day</p>

NOTES:



NOTES:





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