

Exercises after nailbed repair surgery

Hands Burns and Plastics Therapy

Information for Patients

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About your recovery

Most injuries will heal within 2 weeks but may stay tender for a few weeks more. Advice for returning to work depends on the type of job you do. As long as your finger can be kept clean and dry it is generally ok to return to work the next day or within a week.

If your nail has been removed to allow repair, it is usually replaced with a dressing splint. This will detach itself over the next few weeks as a new nail grows in its place. If your nail was lost in an injury, a foil splint can be used instead. This will also detach itself or can be removed after 2 to 3 weeks.

A new nail takes quite a long time to grow. It takes about 2 months to reach the “half-moon” level. It may look different as a result of the damage. This should not affect the function of the finger in the long-term

Looking after your wound

You may have stitches which will be in for 7 to 10 days or they may be dissolvable. Although your stitches are in place it is important you move and use your injured hand. You should be careful not to wet the wound.

Keeping your hand raised

- You may find your hand/finger is swollen after surgery. This is normal.
- To help reduce swelling you should raise (elevate) your hand above the level of your heart at all times (except when using it for activities).
- When you are resting you should keep your hand raised on pillows.

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or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

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To give feedback about this information sheet, contact InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk

How to keep or regain finger range of movement

Do the following exercises 10 times every 2 hours

1. Keeping your fingers straight, bend and then straighten at the knuckles



2. Keeping the knuckles straight, bend and straighten the end and middle joints of the fingers.



3. Make a fist then straighten the fingers



4. Keeping your fingers straight, spread the fingers and thumb apart, then bring them back together.



5. Bend and straighten the tip of the thumb/finger **a**



b



6. Reach with the thumb across the palm and then stretch it out to the side.

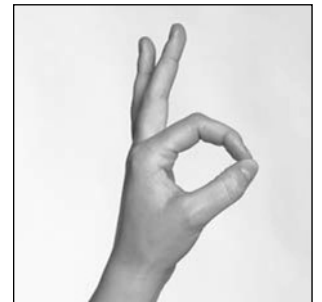
a



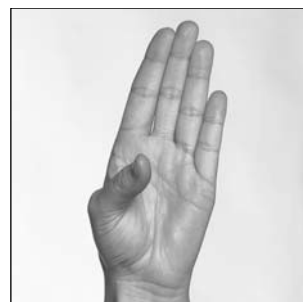
b



7. Touch your thumb to each finger tip in turn



8. Circle your thumb in both directions



Sensitivity

Sometimes, after this injury, your finger may become sensitive. This is known as **hypersensitivity**. These symptoms can be improved (**desensitised**). At first, the treatment will be uncomfortable, but in time you should find this will become easier.

It may take several sessions until you notice the improvement but it will improve if done regularly.

In rare cases, things may not improve and you may want to contact your GP.

Function

Use your hand as normally as possible after your injury. It is easy to stop using your finger without noticing, so think of how you would normally use it.

Start off with light, achievable activities, such as washing dishes or typing and progress onto heavier ones as you improve.



More advice

The following advice is to be done once the wound is healed and dry.

Do the following 4 to 6 times a day:

1. **Massage**

Using a perfume-free moisturiser, such as E-45, massage over and around the sensitive area in circular movements.

Continue for 5 minutes.

You may want to begin away from the sensitive area and slowly move towards the area that is sensitive.



2. **Material massage**

Many materials may cause uncomfortable feelings when rubbed onto the affected area, such as cotton wool, towels, velcro etc.

Rub the sensitive area with a texture that does not irritate you too much, doing small circles over it for 2 to 3 minutes.

As this becomes easier, move onto materials which are more irritating.



3. **Immersion massage**

Fill a bowl with fine materials that are just bearable to touch, such as uncooked rice, lentils and beads. Then dip your injured hand into it, moving it in small circles for 2 to 3 minutes.

Slowly move onto more uncomfortable materials as you improve.



4. **Tapping (percussion)**

Gently tap the affected finger onto a table. As this becomes more comfortable, try tapping the finger against different surfaces and slowly increasing the pressure as you find it easier.





Contact details

If you have any problems after discharge from hospital you can contact the following for advice:

- The Burns and Plastics Dressing Clinic on 0116 258 5328
- The ward you were admitted to
- Your family doctor

Name of Therapist:

Telephone Number: 0116 2586826

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Previous reference:

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