

# Mallet Injury

Information and advice for patients

## Physiotherapy

### What Have you done?

You have snapped the tendon that normally straightens the end joint of your finger. During this a small fragment of bone can come away.

This causes the tip of your finger to lie in a bent position and means that you are unable to straighten your finger fully.

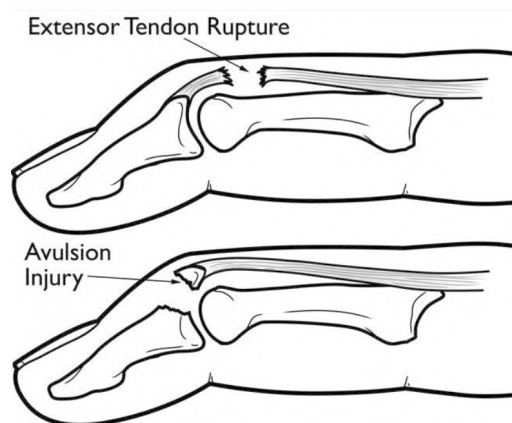


Figure 1. Diagram showing mallet injury (OrthoInfo, 2023)

### Treatment for the first 6 weeks

A splint will be applied and should be worn continuously, even at night, to keep the finger straight for 6 weeks. **There is a risk that removal of the splint will cause the healing process to go back to day 1.**

As the swelling in your finger goes down, the splint may feel slightly loose, if this happens, please contact the Single Point of Access (number below) to arrange for a new splint to be fitted.

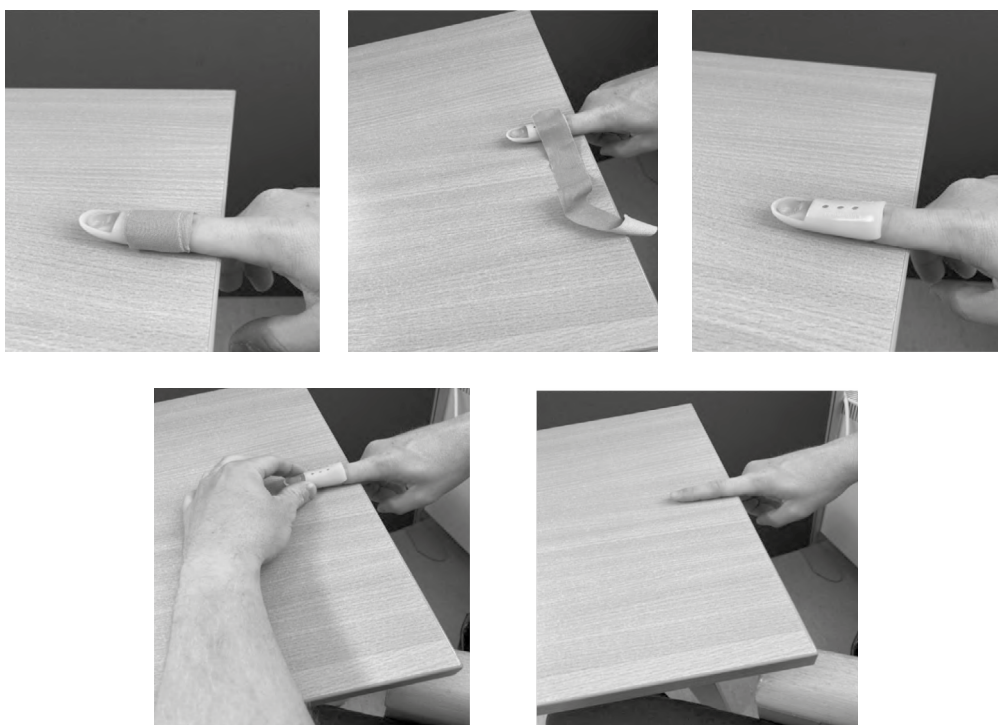
## How to wash a splinted finger

ONLY remove the splint to wash your finger, and it is important to keep the finger straight. This can be done by placing the hand flat on a table, removing the splint and cleaning the finger. Fully dry the finger and then replace the splint without bending the finger.

Try to limit washing the finger to reduce the chance of the finger bending. Initially aim to clean your finger twice a week.

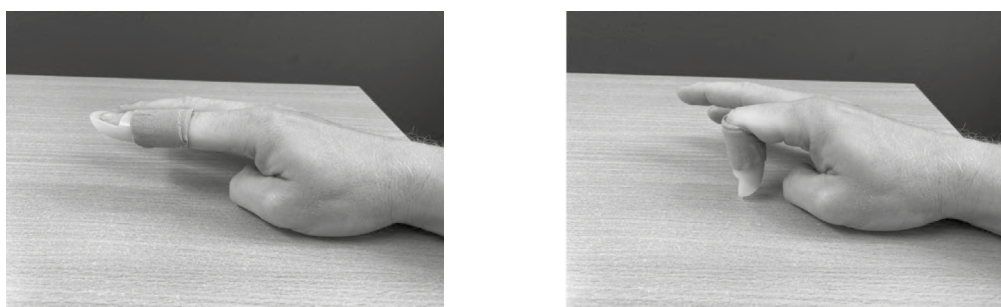
Keep checking skin condition when the splint is removed to wash your finger. Check for pressure points or discomfort where the splint has been digging in or rubbing on the skin. If this is happening contact the hand therapy team as soon as possible so this can be checked. A comfortable lining can be provided for inside the splint if needed.

If moisture builds up within splint, the splint needs to be removed as soon as possible (using the safe method already discussed), and this skin area and the inside of splint needs to be dried fully. The splint then needs to be replaced on the finger.



## Exercise whilst wearing a splint

It is important that you regularly exercise the joints that are not included in the splint. With the splint on you should be able to bend your finger so that the end of the splint touches your palm. If the splint prevents you from doing this, please contact the fracture clinic.



## **Treatment after 6 weeks**

After 6 weeks you should be seen by the hand therapists or orthopaedic team who will advise you to stop wearing the splint in the day.

We advise you to continue wearing the splint for a further 4 weeks at night and whenever the finger might be at risk e.g. work

You might experience redness, swelling and slight pain over the joint for a few months afterwards – this will settle but can take time.

You may be left with a small bump or unable to straighten the finger fully. If this happens it is unfortunately a permanent feature but will not affect the function of your finger

Occasionally even after 3 months of splint treatment, the tendon may fail to heal. Most fingers function well despite the droop at the end joint. If you are concerned, please contact the orthopaedic team.

## **Exercise out of splint**

After the splint is removed, it is important to start gently moving the finger and gradually resume daily activities within the limits of discomfort. This will help improve any stiffness and ensure the safest return to normal function. If you are struggling to get the moment back, please contact the hand therapists.



## **Contact Us**

If you are experiencing concerns within the six weeks that have not been addressed in your leaflet, or you notice a new severe deformity and or discolouration. Please contact SWB Single Point of Access (SPA) on the details below. Access to this service will stop at the end of the first six weeks.

SWB Single Point of Access (SPA): Telephone: 0121 507 2940

Monday – Friday: 8.00am to 8.00pm

Bank Holidays: 9.00am to 5pm

During nighttime (from 8.00pm to 8.00am) Please go to A&E with the clinical letter you received. You can attend A&E at any time if you cannot reach anyone or for an emergency.

Hand Therapy Team: 0121 507 2664 (option 3, option 3)

## Sources used for information in this leaflet

OrthoInfo, 2023. Image of a mallet injury [Online]. American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons. Available from: <https://orthoinfo.aaos.org/en/diseases--conditions/mallet-finger-baseball-finger/> [Accessed 8 May 2025].

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Incorporating the Midland Metropolitan University Hospital, City Health Campus, Sandwell Health Campus and Rowley Regis Hospital.

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M8261

Issue Date: May 2025

Review Date: May 2028