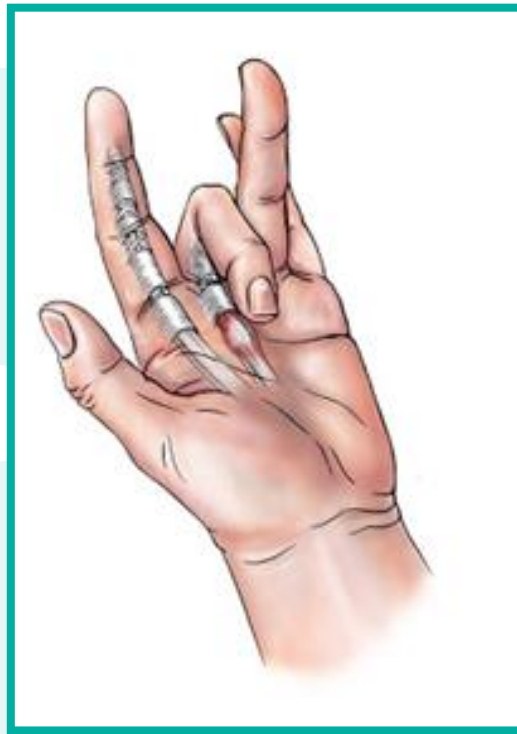




Trigger Finger Information & Exercise

Trigger Finger

Trigger Finger is a painful condition in which a finger or thumb clicks or locks as it is bent towards the palm. This can make it difficult to bend the affected finger or thumb



Causes

Tendons are tough cords that join bone to muscle. They move the bone when the muscles contracts. In the hand, tendons run along the front and back of the bones in the fingers and are attached and controlled by the muscles in the forearm.

The tendons on the palm side (Flexor tendons) are held in place by strong bands of tissue, known as ligaments, which are shaped in arches over the tendon.

The tendons are covered by a protective sheath. The tendons can become irritated when sliding through the tendon sheath.

As a tendon becomes more and more irritated, it can thicken and cause nodules to form, which makes it more difficult for it to pass through the tunnel. Sometimes it can even get stuck when you try to open the palm of your hand.

Sometimes there is a pop as the tendon slips through that tighter area and the finger will end up shooting straight out.

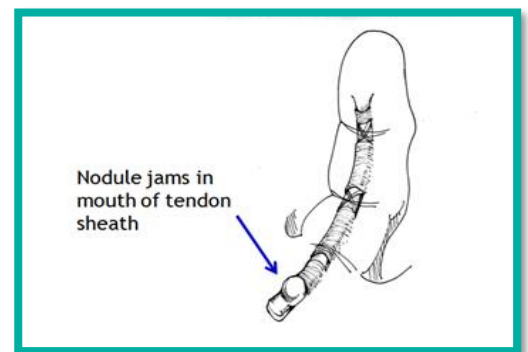
Things that increase the likelihood of getting a Trigger Finger are:

- Diabetes – particularly insulin dependent diabetics
- An injury to the hand
- Rheumatological conditions such as Rheumatoid arthritis
- Over the age of 40

There is little evidence to suggest work activities can cause this problem, however heavy or repetitive hand use can put you at a higher risk of having a Trigger Finger:

- Cleaning
- DIY
- Hand dominant sports
- Gardening

There is no link between this condition and Osteoarthritis of the hand.



Symptoms

- Pain at the site of the triggering in the palm of the hand or thumb.
- Tenderness or pain when pressing on the area
- Clicking of the digit during movement, or locking of the finger in the bent position.
- Stiffness, especially in trigger thumb where movement at the joint is reduced.

Management

In some people, Trigger Finger gets better without treatment. However, if it is not treated, there is a chance the affected finger or thumb could permanently have reduced movement. This makes day to day tasks more difficult to complete.

Treatment of Trigger Finger for most people is conservative or does not require surgery. Management usually involves activity modification, exercise, splinting and anti-inflammatory medications. Sometimes a Cortisol Steroid injection or even surgery is required in severe cases.

Activity Modification

Avoid or modify activities that cause your finger to get stuck or “Trigger”, try to find different ways of doing these activities. For example:

- Shift or slide heavy objects rather than lift them
- Use a pen grip to increase the size of your grip
- Ergonomic Mouse/Keyboards
- Using less pressure when gripping handles – Mops, Shovel, Knife and Folk.

Splints

Splints are designed to be worn when performing tasks that aggravate your symptoms. These can be bought from most pharmacies or off the internet.

A splint can also be worn for comfort and may help to settle symptoms. It is particularly helpful to wear a Trigger Finger splint during the night time while sleeping.





Pain Relief

Over the counter pain relief medication can be used to reduce your pain so you can be more active or complete your exercises.

All medications have side effects and must be used carefully. Paracetamol and ibuprofen are the most common over the counter pain killers. However, some medical conditions will prevent you from taking them so, you should always check with your GP or Pharmacist to ensure they are safe for you.

Ice/Heat

Using Ice to cool or Heat to warm the painful area can be helpful in managing pain, swelling and help the healing process. The smaller the body area the less time you will need to keep the ice or heat on. Start with 5 minutes but no more than 15/20 minutes per body part.

Use a damp towel between yourself and ice to prevent any cold burns. Use a dry towel between yourself and the heat to prevent heat burns. Regularly check your skin while using ice or heat and remove immediately if any burns or injury occurs. Only use heat/ice if your skin sensation is normal.

Use Ice for Pain relief or after activity/exercise.
Use heat for pain relief or before activity/exercise.

Corticosteroid injection

If your symptoms are severe, or not improving after trying the previous advice, management AND exercises then you may be offered a corticosteroid injection. This can help to ease the pain and inflammation.

It is important to re-start your exercises usually after 2 weeks to gain the full benefits from this treatment option.

Some individuals may not be able to receive this treatment due to their current health or types of medicines they are already taking.

Surgical Opinion

If the problem persists with the above management you may be sent for further investigations or even a surgical opinion. Surgery normally involves a decompression of the affected tendon. This involves a small incision into the hand where the surgeon will clear out any excess tissue and make more space within the ligament tunnel for the tendon to pass.

Further Information

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/trigger-finger/treatment/>

<https://www.versusarthritis.org/media/22310/hand-and-wrist-pain-information-booklet.pdf>

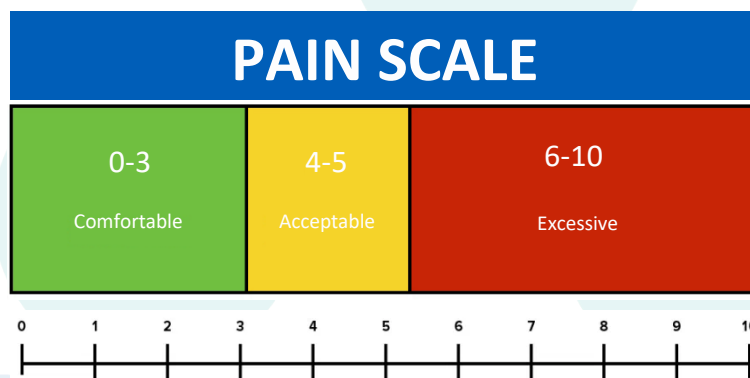
Exercise

Pain during exercises should be manageable. Aim to stay within the green and amber zones. If experiencing excessive pain then you can modify the exercise, and then slowly build it back up over time;

- Reduce the range of movement
- Reduce repetitions
- Reduce the resistance/weight being used
- Slower, less intensity and control the movement more
- Increase the rest between each set of exercises

Progress onto the next stage of exercise once they become easier and you can fully complete the exercises in the comfortable zone of the pain scale.

- Pain after exercise should settle to your pre exercise levels within 30-60 minutes.
- Pain or stiffness due to exercise in the next morning should not last longer than 60 minutes.
- Use your pain relief, ice/heat or anything else you have found that eases your symptoms to help manage.





Trigger Finger Massage



Hold your affected hand face up. Using your opposite thumb, gently massage into your painful hand. The best place to massage is opposite the knuckle, so when you massage your palm, you should feel the knuckle bones. This spot is known as the A1 pulley and a common place for trigger finger to start.

Perform for 30-60 seconds | Repeat 2-3 times | Perform 2 times daily

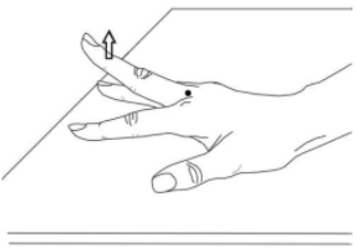
Finger Extension Assisted

Bend your whole finger backwards and hold the stretch. You can do this on any one or all of your fingers. This exercise will help mobilise your finger.



Hold for 5-10 seconds | Repeat 2-3 times | Perform 2-3 times daily

Finger Extension Isolated

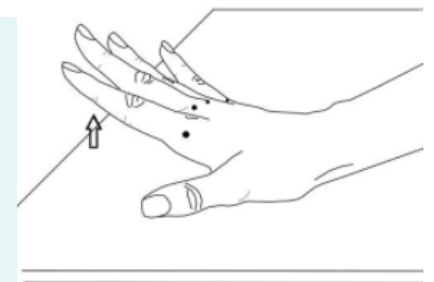


Place your injured hand on a flat surface, lift your injured finger off the surface to mobilise and strengthen it. You can also repeat on other fingers too if you need to improve overall finger mobility.

Hold for 5-10 seconds | Repeat 2-3 times | Perform 2-3 times daily

Finger Extension Active

Place your injured hand on a flat surface, lift all your fingers upwards off the surface together. Use this exercise to strengthen your finger tendons.



Hold for 5-10 seconds | Repeat 2-3 times | Perform 2-3 times daily