



Scan with your
smartphone to get an
e-version of this leaflet.
You might need an
app to scan this code.



After your extensor tendon repair

***Information for
patients and carers***

Physiotherapy Department

What are the extensor tendons?

The extensor tendons connect the muscles at the back of forearm to the bones of your fingers and thumb. These tendons allow you to straighten your fingers and thumb.

If one of these tendons is cut because of trauma (injury), this can be repaired with surgery. However after this surgery, the tendon is very weak and at risk of further damage.

What about my care after surgery?

After your surgery, you'll start physiotherapy right away to allow the tendon to heal and start the journey back to full function.

You'll have weekly reviews for the first 6 weeks and rehabilitation appointments, usually until 12 weeks after your surgery.

Splinting

In the first week following surgery, we'll make a splint for you. Wear this continuously for 5 weeks to protect the repair.

Example of a splint



Exercises

Although you're wearing a splint, it's important to do gentle exercises to move the repaired tendon regularly and make sure it's working properly.

Do the exercises below **5 times each hour**:

Exercise 1:

Straighten your fingers as much as you can.



Exercise 2:

Gently lift the fingers straight with your unaffected hand.



Exercise 3:

Loosen the strap over the fingers and gently curl the fingers up the splint.



Massage and wound care

When your dressings and stitches are removed and your wound is closed, you can begin to massage the scar gently with moisturiser. This helps with healing and reduces feelings of tightness around the wound and fingers.

How long does it take to get back to normal?

After tendon repair surgery, it's important to give your tendon time to heal. Avoid overloading the tendon as this can lead to rupture. Your splint protects the area for the first 5 weeks so you can't drive during this time. You'll also need time off work.

The timescales in the tables below are examples of when you might be able to return to your usual activities. However, do remember that everyone is different and recovers at a different rate.

Activity	Time after your operation
Office-based work	6 to 8 weeks
Driving	8 weeks
Manual work	10 to 12 weeks
Contact sport	12 weeks


From 5 weeks: light activity	6 to 8 weeks	8 to 12 weeks
Using telephone	Painting and decorating	Using a knife
Handling money	Ring pull on can	Ironing
Zips	Using towels	Hoovering
Light clothes	Using fork and spoon	Lifting children
Personal care (such as washing and make-up)	Putting on socks or tights	Lifting boxes, carrying shopping
Dusting	Hanging out washing	Making a bed
Writing, signing your name	Washing up and wiping up	Gardening
Light switches	Sweeping	Cooking, lifting a saucepan or kettle
Using remote control	Reading books	Using a tin opener
	Holding a glass	Sports such as rugby, football, swimming, golf
	Using scissors	


Does surgery have any complications?


Like all surgery, there is a small risk of complications. If you have any concerns about these, please ask staff for more information.


- Infection
- Tendon rupture
- Pain, swelling, numbness and pins and needles
- Tendon adhesions and/or scarring

Contact details

Reception
Physiotherapy Outpatients
Woodend Hospital
 01224 556783

Reception
Orthopaedic Outpatients
Woodend Hospital
 01224 556665

Nurses/Plaster Room
Woodend Hospital
 01224 556370

Plastic Surgery
Dressing Clinic
Purple Zone, Level 1
Aberdeen Royal Infirmary
 01224 552727

This leaflet is also available in large print.

Other formats and languages can be supplied on request. Please call Quality Development on 01224 554149 for a copy. Ask for leaflet 1855.

Feedback from the public helped us to develop this leaflet. If you have any comments on how we can improve it, please call 01224 554149 to let us know.