



What is it?

A mallet splint is designed to keep your finger tip in an over-extended position to allow the tendon, and sometimes an associated small piece of bone, to heal. The splint prevents your finger developing a permanent droop.

Your finger is checked at one week to ensure the splint is fitting correctly.

Because your finger is in a plastic splint for six weeks, it is important to take the splint off at least twice a day to wash and dry your finger thoroughly.

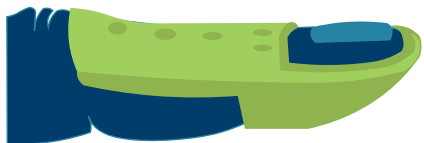
How do I clean my finger?

Gather together the equipment first before taking the splint off – tape, wet flannel, and towel. If the skin is getting moist and white looking, a wipe with surgical spirits may help to dry the skin.

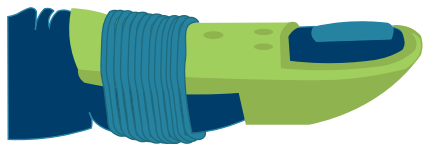


The hand physiotherapist or nursing staff will have applied some white tape which helps hold you finger in extension, while you have the splint off for the short time it takes to clean your finger and dry it.

They will show you how to replace this tape when it needs to be renewed.



When sliding you finger back into the splint, make sure your finger is pushed into the end of the splint.



Retape the splint as illustrated. Make sure the tape doesn't go over the second joint in your finger as this will cause your finger to become stiff.

When can I stop using the splint?

How long you use the splint depends on how bad the injury to the tendon was and if you are wearing the splint as required. Most of the time, it will take 6 weeks to heal.

Week 1

Wear the splint at all times except during meal times. Before bed, take off the splint, do 10 fist movements and then replace the splint.

Week 2

If no lag has developed, remove splint for one hour in the morning and one hour in the evening. Use hand and finger normally for everyday functions but not for work activities for the next three days. Be careful not to knock the finger. If there is still no lag, aim for two hours without the splint each morning and evening.

Week 3 to 6

Use hand normally and wear the splint at night. You may then discard the splint. Should your finger start to droop again, report back to your GP. It may be necessary to start wearing the splint full-time again for two weeks, and then start weaning off the splint again.

Adapted from Mackay HealthPathways