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## What is a finger sprain?

A sprain is an injury to a joint that causes a stretch or tear in a ligament. A ligament is a strong band of tissue connecting one bone to another.

### How does it occur?

A sprain usually occurs when there is an accident such as a ball striking the tip of your finger or you fall forcefully onto your finger.

### What are the symptoms?

There will be pain, swelling, and tenderness in your finger.

### How is it diagnosed?

Your doctor will examine your finger and may order an x-ray to be sure you have not broken any bones in your finger.

### How is it treated?

Treatment may include:

- Applying ice packs to your finger for 20--30 minutes every 3--4 hours for 2--3 days or until the pain goes away keeping your hand elevated when sitting or lying
- Taking an anti-inflammatory (Ibuprofen)
- Doing exercises to strengthen your finger during the healing process.

### When can I return to my sport or activity?

The goal of rehabilitation is to return you to your sport or activity as soon as is safely possible. If you return too soon you may worsen your injury, which could lead to permanent damage. Everyone recovers from injury at a different rate. Return to your activity will be determined by how soon your finger recovers, not by how many days or weeks it has been since your injury occurred. In general, the longer you have symptoms before you start treatment, the longer it will take to get better.

Your doctor will recommend that your sprained finger be splinted or "buddy taped" (taped to the finger next to it) for 1 to 4 weeks after your injury. In many cases, you will be able to return to your activities as long as you are wearing your splint or have your finger taped.

Your finger may remain swollen with decreased range of motion and strength for many weeks. It is important to continue your rehabilitation exercises during this time and even after you return to your sport.

### **How can I prevent a finger sprain?**

Finger sprains are usually the result of injuries that are not preventable.

### **Finger Dislocation**

A finger dislocation is a displacement of the bones of the finger from their normal position.

#### **How does it occur?**

A dislocation usually occurs when there is an accident such as a ball striking the tips of the finger or a person falling forcefully onto a finger or getting a finger hooked into a piece of equipment like a football mask or a basketball net.

#### **What are the symptoms?**

In a dislocation there is immediate pain and swelling. The finger looks swollen and crooked. You will usually be unable to bend or straighten the dislocated joint.

#### **How is it diagnosed?**

Your doctor will examine your finger. An x-ray will be taken to confirm the dislocation and to determine if there is also a break in your finger.

#### **How is it treated?**

Your doctor will realign the dislocated bones. Your finger will be placed in a protective splint for several weeks.

Your finger will most likely be swollen after the dislocation. You should apply ice packs to your finger for 20 to 30 minutes every 3 to 4 hours for 2 or 3 days or until the pain goes away. Your hand should be elevated on a pillow while you are lying down or on the back of a chair or couch while you are sitting. Your doctor may prescribe an anti-inflammatory medication. You will be given exercises to strengthen your finger during the healing process.

#### **When can I return to my sport or activity?**

The goal of rehabilitation is to return you to your sport or activity as soon as is safely possible. If you return too soon you may worsen your injury, which could lead to permanent damage. Everyone

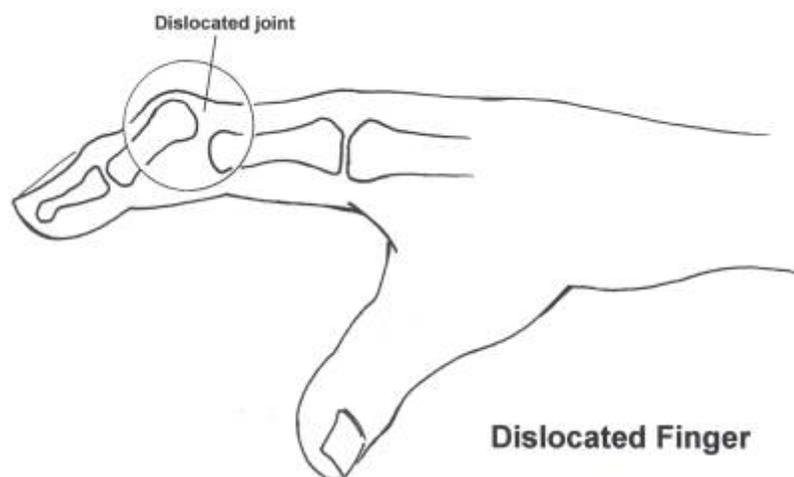
recovers from injury at a different rate. Return to your activity will be determined by how soon your finger recovers, not by how many days or weeks it has been since your injury occurred.

Your doctor will recommend that your dislocated finger be splinted or "buddy taped" (taped to the finger next to it) for 3 to 6 weeks after your injury. In many cases, you will be able to return to your sport or activity as long as you are wearing your splint or have your finger taped.

Your finger may remain swollen with decreased range of motion and strength for many weeks. It is important to continue your rehabilitation exercises during this time and even after you return to your sport or activity.

## How can I prevent finger dislocation?

Finger dislocations are usually the result of accidents that are not preventable. However, whenever possible you should try to avoid getting your finger stuck in objects such as helmets, nets, or athletic jerseys.



## Mallet Finger (Baseball Finger)

### What is mallet finger?

Mallet finger, also known as baseball finger, is an injury to the fingertip caused by a blow to the end of the finger. In mallet finger, the tendon that straightens the tip of the finger is injured and you may lose the ability to straighten your finger.

### How does it occur?

There is usually a jamming injury to the tip of the finger.

### What are the symptoms?

You may have pain and swelling at the tip of the finger. You may be unable to straighten the tip of your finger. If the injury is old or if you do not seek medical care soon enough, you may permanently lose the ability to straighten your finger.

### How is it diagnosed?

Your doctor will examine your finger and review your symptoms. An x-ray may be taken to see if there is also a fracture. Commonly, the tendon will pull off a piece of the bone to which it is attached at the end of your finger.

### **How is it treated?**

Your finger will be straightened and placed in a splint for about 6 weeks to allow the tendon to reattach to the finger bone or, if a piece of bone has been pulled off, to allow the bone to heal. It is important to keep this splint on to permit healing. Because your finger probably will be swollen, you should apply ice packs to your finger for 20 to 30 minutes every 3 to 4 hours for the first 2 or 3 days or until the pain goes away. Your hand should be elevated on a pillow when you are lying down or placed on the back of a chair or couch when you are sitting.

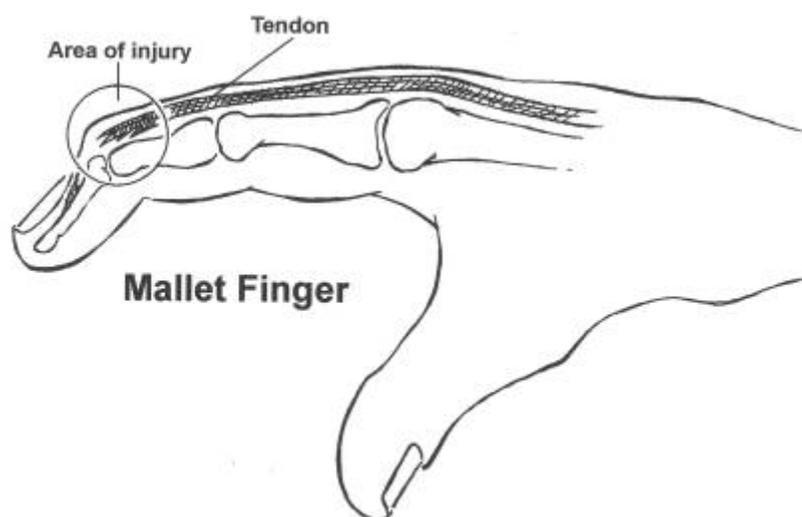
### **When can I return to my sport or activity?**

The goal of rehabilitation is to return you to your sport or activity as soon as is safely possible. If you return too soon you may worsen your injury, which could lead to permanent damage. Everyone recovers from injury at a different rate. Return to your sport or activity will be determined by how soon your finger recovers, not by how many days or weeks it has been since your injury occurred.

It is important that you wear a splint for your mallet finger for at least 6 weeks after your injury. If you wear your splint as your doctor has recommended you may return to your activities immediately. NOT wearing your splint can lead to permanent injury or deformity of your finger.

### **How can I prevent mallet finger?**

Mallet finger is caused by a direct blow to the end of the finger during an accident that is usually not preventable.



### **Trigger Finger**

#### **What is trigger finger?**

Trigger finger is a condition in which it is difficult to straighten a finger (or fingers) once bent. The medical term for trigger finger is stenosing tenosynovitis.

### **How does it occur?**

Trigger finger results from inflammation or swelling of the fibrous sheath that encloses the tendons. A tendon is a band of strong fibrous tissue that connects a muscle to a bone.

The straightening mechanism hesitates for a few moments before the tendon suddenly overcomes the resistance. The finger then straightens with a sudden jerk or triggering motion.

### **What are the symptoms of trigger finger?**

Symptoms include:

- A snapping sensation (triggering) in the affected finger or fingers
- Inability to extend the finger smoothly or at all (it may lock in place while bent)
- Tenderness to the touch over the tendon, usually at the base of the finger or palm
- Soreness in the affected finger or fingers.

### **How is trigger finger diagnosed?**

Your doctor will review your symptoms and examine you.

### **How is trigger finger treated?**

Sometimes it is helped by ice and anti-inflammatory medication (Ibuprofen). If this does not work, your doctor may give you an injection of cortisone and a local anesthetic (to keep you from feeling pain with the injection) to reduce the inflammation of the tendon sheath.

### **When can I return to my sport or activity?**

You may return to your sport or activity when your finger no longer catches or locks.

### **How long do the effects of trigger finger last?**

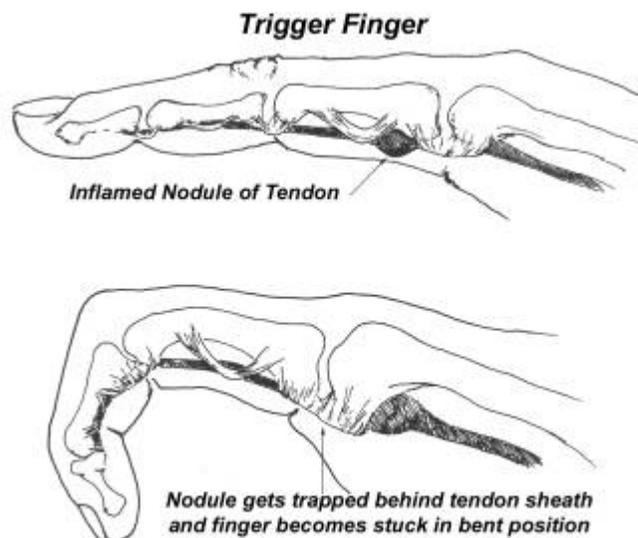
The severity of trigger finger varies from person to person. Although response to treatment varies, results are usually good. It is best to discuss progress with your doctor on a regular basis. Surgery for this condition is usually very successful.

### **How can I take care of myself?**

It is important to follow your doctor's instructions. In addition, rest and limit the activity of the affected finger or fingers and of the hand and wrist.

### **What can I do to help prevent trigger finger?**

Since the cause of trigger finger is unknown, there is no reliable way to prevent this condition from developing.



### **Finger Injury Rehabilitation Exercises**

You may do all of these exercises right away (see diagram below).

1. Passive range of motion: Gently assist the injured joint by helping to bend it with your other hand. Gently try to straighten out the injured joint with your other hand. Repeat slowly, holding for 5