

Phalanx (Finger) Fracture

Hand 6

Fracture Care Team: Shared Care Plan

Trust Switchboard for both sites: 0300 131 4500
Fracture clinic and orthopaedic outpatient appointments:
Eastbourne 0300 131 4788
Conquest 0300 131 4861
Casting Department: Eastbourne 0300 131 5564
Casting Department: Conquest 0300 131 4860

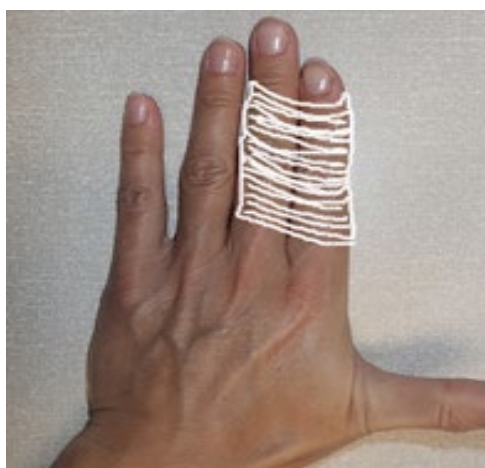
This information leaflet explains the ongoing management of your injury.

You have broken your phalanx (finger bone).

- Healing:** This normally takes approximately 6 weeks to heal.
- Pain and swelling:** Take your normal painkillers if it is painful. You may find it continues to be a bit achy and swollen for a few months after your injury.
- Using your hand:** You may use the hand as pain allows. You can strap your fingers together for comfort. It is important to keep the rest of the fingers bending to stop them becoming stiff.
- Follow up:** We do not routinely follow up these injuries. However, if you continue to have pain or are limited in what you can do please get in contact with us on the above number.

If your fracture is at the tip of the finger, it is sometimes called a 'tuft fracture'. You may wish to use a rigid splint when there is a risk of knocking it.

Picture of Finger buddy strapping



If you are worried that you are unable to follow this rehabilitation plan,

Or if you are experiencing pain or symptoms, other than at the site of the original injury or surrounding area,

Or have any questions, then please phone the Fracture Care Team on the details provided above for advice.

Please follow the Management / Rehabilitation plan outlined below -

Weeks since injury	Plan
0 - 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Use the strapping for comfort✓ If you have a 'tuft fracture' you may wear the splint when it is helpful – you may take it off when you like.✓ Keep your fingers moving to prevent stiffness –see initial exercises
3- 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Continue to use the strapping or splint if needed✓ Move your injured finger-see exercises stage 2
6 -12	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ The injury has healed.✓ Return to normal activities
12	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✗ If you are still experiencing significant pain and swelling then please contact the Fracture Care Team for advice.

Advice for a new injury

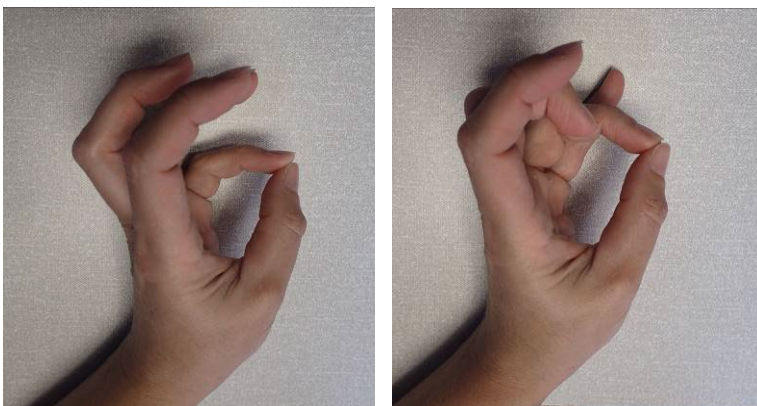
Cold packs:

A cold pack (ice pack or frozen peas wrapped in a damp towel) can provide short-term pain relief.

Apply this to the sore area for up to 15 minutes, every few hours. The ice must never be in direct contact with the skin.

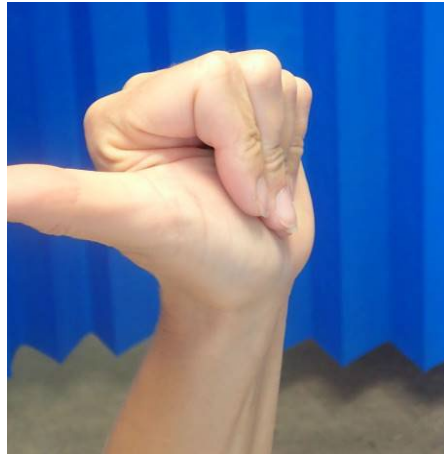
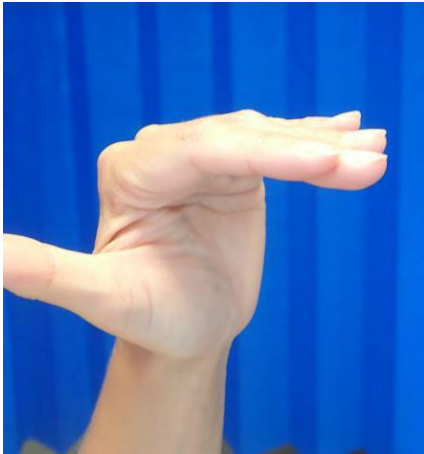
Initial exercises – to start straight away

Do these exercises several times a day



Touch each finger to your thumb.

Repeat x 5



Bend and straighten all the joints in your fingers as shown.
Do not force the movement, work within your limits.

Repeat x 5



Stage 2 Exercises – to start from 3 weeks after injury

Continue to do initial exercises as well.



Use your other hand to keep your finger steady and bend and straighten the finger joint nearest your palm.

Repeat x 5

Use your other hand to keep your finger steady and bend and straighten the finger joint nearest the end of your finger.

Repeat x 5



If finger joints become stiff in a bent position, it can help to hold them in a straighter position for 10 seconds. Massage of the soft tissues can also help.

Smoking cessation

Medical evidence suggests that smoking prolongs fracture healing time. In extreme cases it can stop healing altogether. It is important that you consider this information with relation to your recent injury. Stopping smoking during the healing phase of your fracture will help ensure optimal recovery from this injury.

For advice on smoking cessation and local support available, please refer to the following website: smokefree.nhs.uk or discuss this with your GP.

Sources of information

This information leaflet has been developed by the Fracture Care Team at Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals Fracture Care Team and adapted for use at East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust. Information been updated during the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure that patients with injuries have information, support and care despite social distancing.

Important information

This patient information is for guidance purposes only and is not provided to replace professional clinical advice from a qualified practitioner.

Your comments

We are always interested to hear your views about our leaflets. If you have any comments, please contact the patient experience team on 0300 131 4784 or esh-tr.patientexperience@nhs.net.

Hand hygiene

We are committed to maintaining a clean, safe environment. Hand hygiene is very important in controlling infection. Alcohol gel is widely available at the patient bedside for staff use and at the entrance of each clinical area for visitors to clean their hands before and after entering.

Other formats

If you require any of our leaflets in alternative formats, such as large print or alternative languages, please contact the Equality and Human Rights Department on 0300 131 4434 or esh-tr.AccessibleInformation@nhs.net

After reading this information are there any questions you would like to ask? Please list below and ask your nurse, practitioner or doctor.

Reference

Thank you to the Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust and to Kate Weatherly, Specialist Orthopaedic Practitioner for the first version.

This leaflet can also be found at: www.esht.nhs.uk/leaflet/phalanx-finger-fracture/

The following clinicians have been consulted and agreed this patient information:

Mr Guy Selmon – Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon
Mr Andrew Skyrme – Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon
Prof Scarlett McNally - Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon
Miss Miranda Champion - Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon
Helen Harper-Smith – Professional Lead Physiotherapist
Hilary Kircher – Clinical / Operational Lead Outpatient Physiotherapist

The Clinical Specialty/Unit that have agreed this patient information leaflet:
Diagnostic, Anaesthetic and Surgery - Department of Trauma and Orthopaedics

Next review date: September 2025
Responsible clinician/author: Helen Harper-Smith – Professional Lead Physiotherapist
Prof Scarlett McNally – Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon

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