

## Thumb Phalanx Fracture

Hand 11

### Fracture Care Team: Shared Care Plan

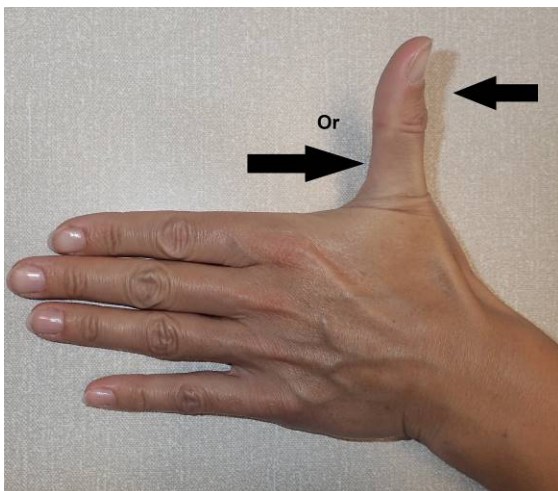
Trust Switchboard for both sites: 0300 131 4500  
Fracture clinic and orthopaedic outpatient appointments:  
Eastbourne 0300 131 4788  
Conquest 0300 131 4861  
Casting Department: Eastbourne 0300 131 5564  
Casting Department: Conquest 0300 131 4860

This information leaflet explains the ongoing management of your injury.

### You have broken your thumb

- Healing:** This normally takes approximately 4-6 weeks to heal.
- Pain and swelling:** Take your normal pain killers if you are in pain.
- Using your hand:** You may use the hand as pain allows. You may have been given a splint or you can strap your fingers together for comfort. It is important to use the hand and keep the rest of the finger bending to stop it becoming stiff.
- Follow up:** We do not routinely follow up these injuries as they heal well. 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.

### Area of injury



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, 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"><li>✓ Use the splint or strapping if needed for comfort</li><li>✓ Keep your fingers moving to prevent stiffness</li></ul>
3 - 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Try not to use the splint</li><li>✓ Move your injured thumb-see exercises stage 2</li></ul>
6 - 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ The injury has healed.</li><li>✓ Return to normal activities</li></ul>
12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✗ If you are still experiencing significant pain and swelling then please contact the Fracture Care Team for advice.</li></ul>

### Advice for a new injury

#### Cold packs:

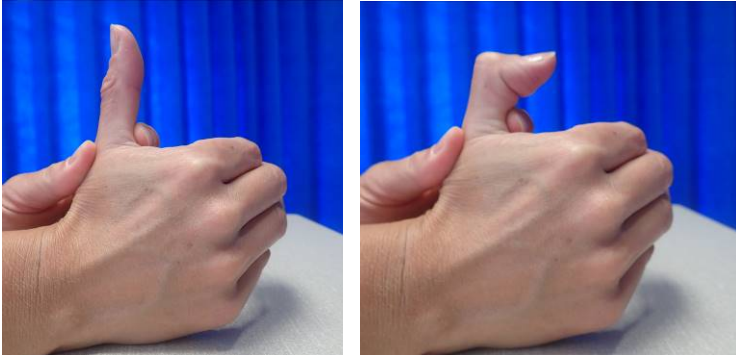
A cold pack (ice pack or frozen peas wrapped in a damp towel) can provide short-term pain relief.

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.

## Exercises:

Do these exercises several times a day

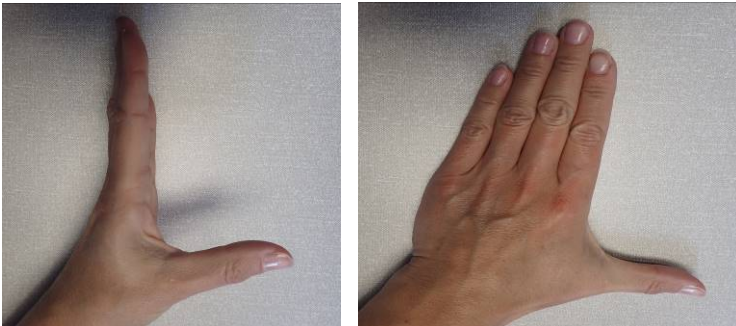
### Stage 2 Exercises:



Use your other hand to keep your thumb steady and bend and straighten the joint.

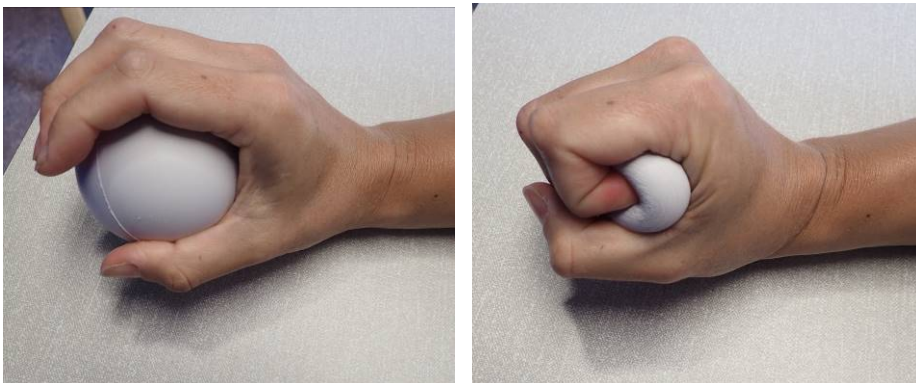
Repeat x 5

With your hand on its side (thumb up) move your thumb out into an L shape. Repeat x 5



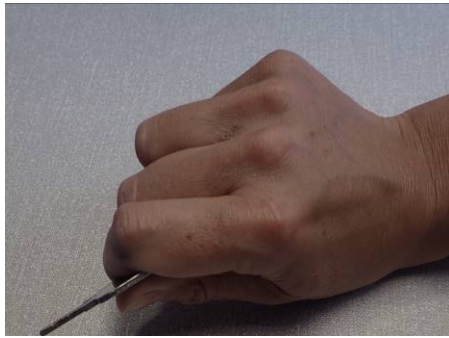
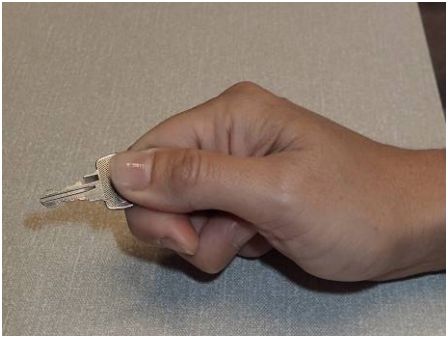
Lie your palm flat on a table and move your thumb out to the side and back.

Repeat x 5

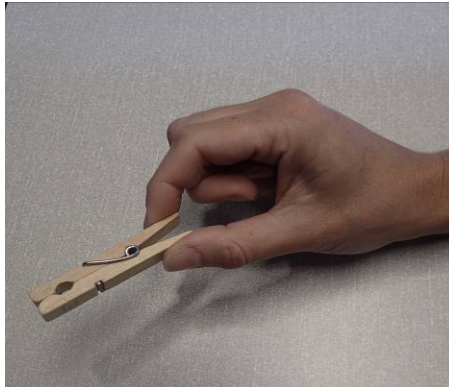
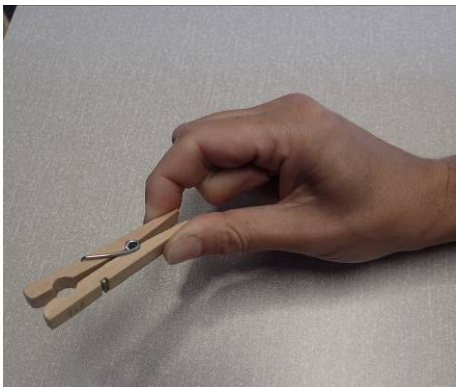
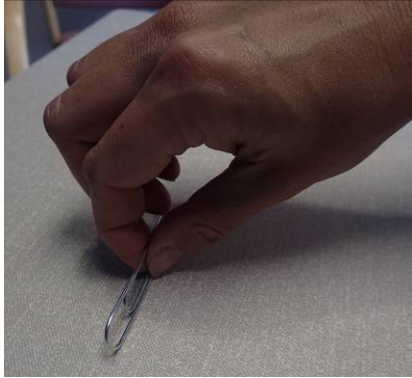


Squeeze a soft ball, playdough, plastic bottle or similar item.

Do this for 30-60 seconds.



Practice hand movements, here are some examples; turning keys, picking up small objects, doing crafts or anything that involves using your hands.



Practice your pinch grip; squeeze objects such as clothes pegs.

## 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](http://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 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 – Tel: 0300 131 4731 or by email at: [esh-tr.patientexperience@nhs.net](mailto:esh-tr.patientexperience@nhs.net)

## Hand hygiene

The trust is 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 the Trust leaflets in alternative formats, such as large print or alternative languages, please contact the Equality and Human Rights Department.**

**Tel: 0300 131 4434 Email: [esh-tr.AccessibleInformation@nhs.net](mailto: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.

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## Reference

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

**This leaflet can also be found at: [www.esht.nhs.uk/leaflet/thumb-phalanx-fracture/](http://www.esht.nhs.uk/leaflet/thumb-phalanx-fracture/)**

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

Mr Guy Selmon – Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon  
Mr Andrew Skyrme – Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon  
Mrs 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:  
Department of Trauma and Orthopaedics

Next review date: April 2023  
Responsible clinician/author: Helen Harper-Smith – Professional Lead Physiotherapist  
Mrs Scarlett McNally – Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon

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