

PATIENT INFORMATION

De Quervain's Tenosynovitis

Information Sheet

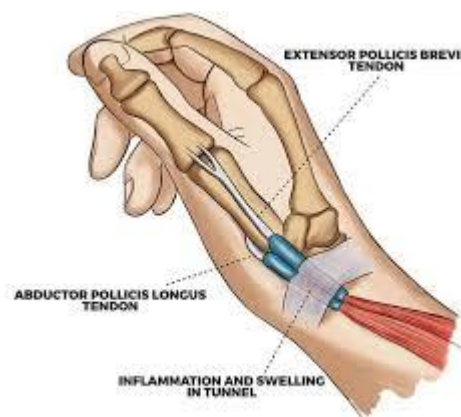
Hand Therapy Service

What is De Quervain's Tenosynovitis?

It is inflammation of the tendon sheath surrounding the tendons that move the thumb.

It often occurs in females especially during times of hormone changes (pregnancy / menopause). Overuse of the tendon with repetitive activities can aggravate the problem.

Pain is often felt at the base of the thumb; aggravated by thumb and wrist movements including gripping, pinching and wringing.



Rehabilitation for De Quervain's

Stage 1: Continuously wear a splint for 3-4 weeks to immobilise and rest the tendon.

Stage 2: (3 - 4 weeks) – Continue wearing the splint but remove every 2 hours to do each of the following exercises 5-10 times



1) Place hand flat on the table. Using your good hand, lift thumb off the table. Hold it there on its own and slowly & smoothly lower the thumb back down to the table.

2) Place your hand on the table on the little finger. Using your good hand, lift the thumb up and away from the hand. Hold it there on its own and then slowly and smoothly lower it back down to meet the fingers.





3) Place your arm on the table with your wrist over the edge. Slowly lower the wrist down towards the floor until you start to feel discomfort. Using your good hand, bring the hand back up to the starting position.

Stage 3: (5 weeks) – Remove splint during the day for light activities but still wear it at night for a further 1-2 weeks.

Complete the exercises from stage 2 but without the other hand helping with the movements. - 10 repetitions of each every 2 hours, increasing repetitions if pain free (or reducing if the pain increases).

Stage 4: To commence when symptoms are settled & you have weaned off the splint entirely.

- Increase the repetitions of the previous exercises as able.
- Gently build grip strength work as pain allows.
- Place an elastic band around your fingers and thumb. Spread thumb away from fingers, then slowly bring them back together. Low repetitions initially then gradually increase as comfort allows.

Management of De Quervain's.

Activity Modification Try to reduce doing repetitive tasks which maybe aggravating the tendon (e.g. scissors, secateurs, lifting, racket sports etc)

Ice massage – Hold an ice cube in some a cloth and firmly rub the ice cube over the base of your finger until it is all melted. This will help to reduce the inflammation.

Anti-Inflammatory gel e.g. Ibuprofen gel – unless contra-indicated by any other medical conditions you have (check with your pharmacist)

Further treatment options? If your symptoms aren't improving with the above advise, a steroid injection may be suitable to help settle the pain.

If you have any problems / concerns, please contact:

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For further assistance or to receive this information in a different format, please contact the department which created this leaflet.