

## PATIENT INFORMATION

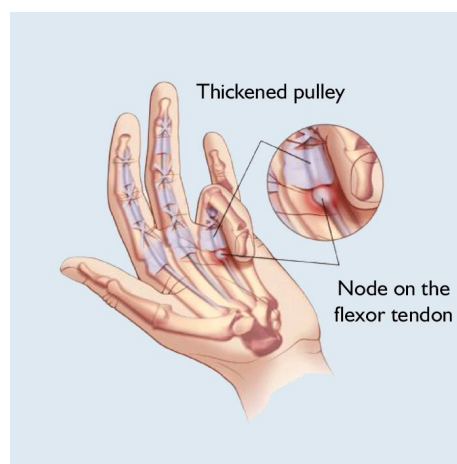
# Trigger Finger

## Management and advice

### What is Trigger Finger?

Trigger finger occurs when thickening develops around the flexor tendon sheath preventing free flowing motion of the flexor tendon.

This can occur for many reasons: repetitive tasks; diabetes; arthritis; or for no reason at all. Trigger finger can occur in any finger or the thumb and can either be in your dominant or non-dominant hand.



### How to manage a Trigger Finger.

Trigger finger can cause pain when you try to straighten your finger so this needs to be done gently – often soaking your hand in warm water is a good way to help ease the finger straight again.

Ideally, we want to prevent the finger from getting stuck in a bent position, as the more time this happens, the more irritated and thickened the tendon becomes.

**Ice massage** – put some baby oil on the base of your finger. Hold an ice cube in some cling film or 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** eg Ibuprofen gel – if this is not contra-indicated by any other medical conditions you have (check with your pharmacist) – put this on at night time over the base of your finger.

### Exercises for Trigger Finger.

Modified tendon gliding exercises can be effective in encouraging better movement and free gliding of the 2 tendons within your finger.



Scrunch the tips of your fingers in tightly and then straighten back up again.



Bend your fingers at the main knuckle whilst keeping the little joints straight; then straighten up again.



Use your other hand to passively push your fingers into a fist.

Try doing 5 – 10 of each of these exercises 4 times a day

### Activity Modification

Try to reduce doing repetitive gripping tasks which maybe aggravating the tendon (eg scissors, secateurs).

### Splinting for trigger finger?

Splinting is very effective if your finger triggers overnight and as a treatment for mild triggering.

There are splints available to buy on the internet. Search for “*trigger finger splint*”, you should aim to get a short splint that limits movement only at the bottom of your finger, as shown:

The aim of splinting is to reduce the excursion of movement of the tendon to prevent the nodule from passing through the tight pulley and getting stuck. By using the splint at night, it will rest the tendon and pulley giving it chance to reduce the thickening.



## Further treatment options?

If your finger is constantly triggering or you are having to use your other hand to straighten the finger you may benefit from a steroid injection.

If this is not successful, then a small operation can be performed to release the pulley.

If you have any problems / concerns, please contact:

### **Crow Thorne Hand Therapy Centre**

Torbay Hospital  
Lawes Bridge  
Torquay  
TQ2 7AA

☎ 01803 654935  
✉ [tsdft.handtherapyreferrals@nhs.net](mailto:tsdft.handtherapyreferrals@nhs.net)  
[www.torbayandsouthdevon.nhs.uk](http://www.torbayandsouthdevon.nhs.uk)

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