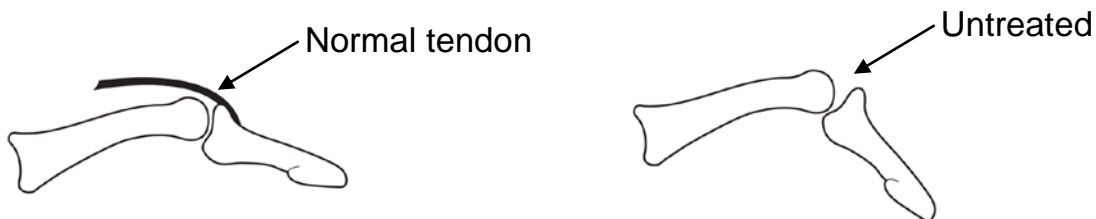


# Mallet finger

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## What is it?

Mallet finger is when the end joint of a finger bends but will not straighten by itself. The joint can be pushed straight but will not hold that position on its own.



## What causes it?

Mallet fingers can happen from a cut or jamming the finger, and sometimes there is a small break or fracture. This break is often called an avulsion. It can happen from something as simple as scrubbing the floor or grabbing an object!



## What can you do to help?

Don't ignore it, or think it will straighten out on its own. This is unlikely. The longer the finger stays bent, the harder it will be to fix. Sometimes, surgery is needed. However, most mallet fingers can be treated by a therapist, who can:

- provide a comfortable splint to straighten the finger
- show you exercises later on if stiffness is the problem.

A good splint is important, because proper treatment involves wearing the splint at all times for a long time.

## Instructions for Mallet finger

\_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ weeks      Start date: \_\_\_\_\_

- Splint is to be worn at all times; this includes sleeping and showering.
- Splint can be removed 1 to 2 times a day. When the splint is off, you must support your finger at all times. You can use a table or your other hand as support.
- You can get back to most or all of your activities as long as you are sure that the splint will stay on securely.
- If the splint does not stay on securely with Velcro, use micropore tape or coban (both are more gentle to the skin for extended wear).
- Make sure skin is kept clean and dry.
- If finger is swollen/reddened, ice can be applied 2 to 3 times a day, making sure finger remains supported.
- Make sure that you bend your middle joint of the finger as shown.

\_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ weeks      Start date: \_\_\_\_\_

- Splint must still be worn **at night** and during **all risky activity** such as lifting, squeezing, and sports. If unsure, wear splint during the activity until you check with your therapist.
- During this “trial phase”, it is extremely important to watch for any loss of straightening. **If you notice that you can't straighten the tip of your finger as much as before, you need to wear your splint all the time again and make another appointment with us.**
- Begin active movement exercises **only**, 3 to 5 times a day, as shown by your therapist. **Do not** force fingers with other hand or squeeze a ball.

With these next 3 steps, you must watch for any loss of straightening. If you notice that you can't straighten the tip of your finger as much as before, stop the new activity and go back to previous step.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Begin **gentle** passive movement (pushing with other hand) as shown by therapist; wear splint all times as before.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Begin removing splint at night; wear it with risky activities such as sports.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Begin strengthening as shown.