

Trigger Finger / Thumb



Polyclinics
SingHealth



*Disclaimer: Please note that the instructions shown are strictly for general information only.
If you have any queries, kindly check with your healthcare provider.*

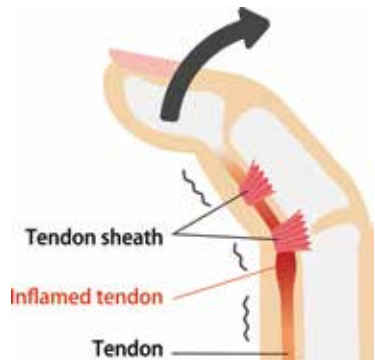


SCAN ME

A What is trigger finger / thumb?

Trigger finger is a common condition that causes pain, stiffness and a sensation of locking or catching when you bend and straighten your affected finger or thumb.

It can affect any fingers, but the thumb, middle and ring finger are most commonly affected.



At the base of the finger, the tendon which bends your finger passes through a tunnel (tendon sheath) in the palm and glides smoothly as you bend your finger.

In trigger finger, this tunnel becomes narrow due to inflammation and thickening. Over time, the tendon may also become swollen and develop a small lump. This makes the finger harder to glide through the tunnel. You may feel a catching or popping sensation as you bend your finger (“triggering”) and is often painful.



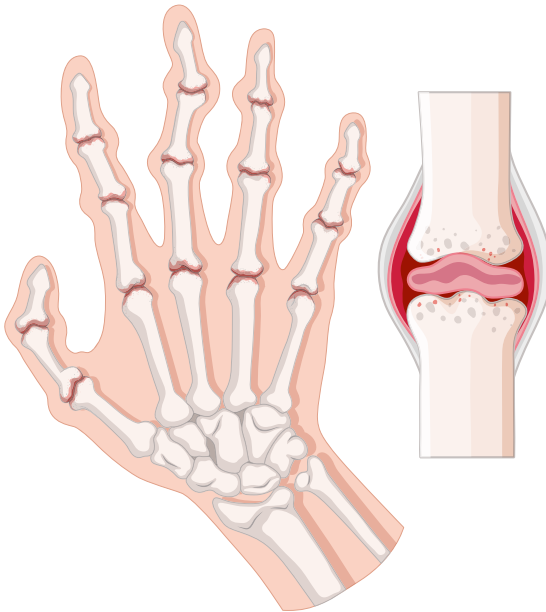
Example of a finger splint:

B

What are the common causes of trigger finger / thumb?

There are several factors that may increase the risk of developing trigger finger / thumb:

- Repeated or forceful gripping, such as carrying shopping bags, prolonged writing, rock climbing, or the strenuous grasping of small tools
- Medical conditions such as diabetes mellitus and rheumatoid arthritis



Rheumatoid arthritis



What are the signs & symptoms of trigger finger / thumb?

At the initial stage, there may be pain as you bend and straighten your finger. As the condition progresses, you may experience a catching or popping sensation with finger movement (“triggering”).

You may also experience finger stiffness, especially in the morning or a tender lump at the base of the finger in the palm.

In severe cases, the finger locks and becomes stuck in a bent position. You may need to use the other hand to straighten or unlock the trigger finger.



You should seek medical attention early if you have...

- Intense finger pain or movement restriction following a fall or trauma
- Prolonged morning stiffness especially over multiple finger joints
- A hot swollen finger or joint
- Hand numbness
- Inability to straighten or bend your finger








Do you need an imaging scan?

Diagnosis of trigger finger / thumb does not usually require any imaging.

Where necessary, your doctor may order an X-ray to rule out other conditions.

F What are the treatment options?

Depending on the condition, your healthcare provider may recommend:

Activity modification and splinting	Medications	Physiotherapy
		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduce activity that requires repetitive or forceful gripping• Splinting helps rest the tendon and prevent the friction caused by finger movement until the inflammation resolved	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Paracetamol and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) can reduce pain and inflammation in the short term	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appropriate hand exercise programme such as tendon gliding can improve your pain and regain your hand function• Physical modalities such as therapeutic ultrasound, heat therapy or Extracorporeal Shockwave Therapy (ESWT) can stimulate the healing
Injections	Specialist referral	
		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Corticosteroid injections may be used to reduce the inflammation in the tendon sheath, which is effective in reducing pain and triggering• Pain may return after 4 to 6 months for some patients, where a second injection may be considered	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Trigger finger usually does not need specialist treatment• Your doctor will only refer you to see a specialist when necessary for further investigation and treatment such as surgery i.e. Trigger Finger Release	

Simple home exercises:

1



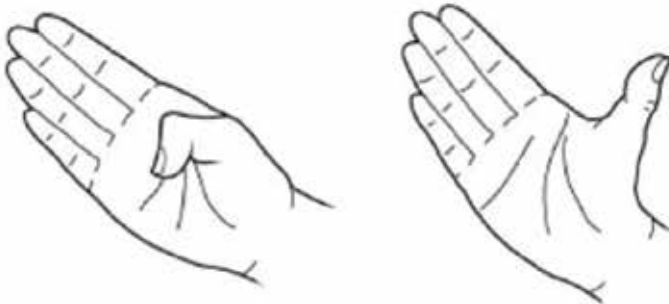
Straight hand

Hook fist

Full fist

Straight fist

2



You may perform these exercises
3 times a day:

1. Fingers tendon gliding exercise:
**10 seconds hold, 10 repetitions
for each position**
2. Thumb exercise: **10 seconds hold,
10 repetitions**

[illegible]

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