

Recovery

It is common to have some soreness in your palm. Frequently raising your hand above your heart can help reduce swelling and pain. Recovery is usually complete within a few weeks, but it may take up to six months for all swelling and stiffness to go away. If your finger was quite stiff before surgery, physiotherapy and finger exercises may help loosen it up.

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Trigger Finger



What is Trigger Finger?

Trigger finger, also known as stenosing tenosynovitis, is a condition in which one of your fingers gets stuck in a bent position. Your finger may straighten with a snap - like a trigger being pulled and released. Trigger finger occurs when inflammation narrows the space within the sheath that surrounds the tendon in the affected finger. If it is severe, your finger may become locked in a bent position.

Causes

People whose work or hobbies require repetitive gripping actions (a firm grip for a long time) are at higher risk of developing trigger finger. The condition is also more common in women. It can also occur in patients with Rheumatoid Arthritis.

Symptoms

Symptoms may progress from mild to severe and include:

- Finger stiffness, particularly in the morning
- A popping or clicking sensation as you move your finger
- Tenderness or a bump (nodule) in the palm at the base of the affected finger
- Finger catching or locking in a bent position, which suddenly pops straight

- Finger locked in a bent position, which you are unable to straighten

Trigger finger more commonly affects the thumb, middle and ring finger. More than one finger may be affected at a time, and both hands might be involved.

Diagnosis

The doctor makes the diagnosis based on your medical history and a physical examination. During the physical examination, the doctor will ask you to open and close your hand, checking for areas of pain, smoothness of motion and evidence of locking. The doctor will also feel your palms to see if there is a lump present.

Treatments

Trigger finger treatment varies depending on its severity and duration.

- **Medications:** Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAID) may relieve the pain
- **Conservative noninvasive treatments:** Rest and avoid activities that require repetitive gripping, repeated grasping or the prolonged use of vibrating hand-held machinery
- **Ice or heat:** Some people experience improvement by icing the palm several times a day. Others see more benefit with warm-water soaking

- **Stretching exercises:** The doctor may also suggest gentle exercises to help maintain mobility in your fingers
- **Steroid injection:** An injection of a steroid medication near or into the tendon sheath may reduce inflammation and allow the tendon to glide freely again

Surgical Procedure

If your symptoms are serious or if conservative treatments cannot help, the doctor may suggest surgery. The goal of surgery is to widen the opening of the tunnel so that the tendon can slide through it more easily. This is usually done on an outpatient basis, meaning you will not have to stay overnight at the hospital.

Most people are given an injection of local anaesthesia to numb the hand for the procedure. Working through a small incision near the base of your affected finger, the surgeon will cut open the constricted section of tendon sheath. Most people are able to move their fingers immediately after surgery.

Common Risk and Complication

- Wound infection, adhesion, scarring and residual pain
- Recurrence of triggering

