



THE ORTHOPEDIC PARTNERS
AN RCM CLINIC

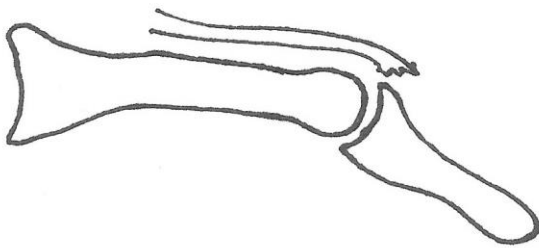
PARK CITY • HEBER CITY • SALT LAKE CITY

Patrick Olson, M.D.

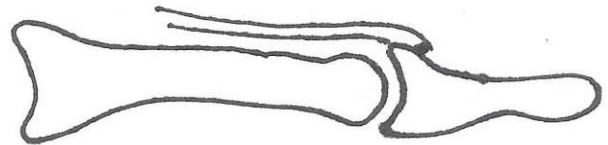
Mallet Finger Injury

Healing the Tendon (date of injury - 8 weeks)

1. **Keep the finger in the splint at ALL TIMES for 8 weeks:** The finger splint keeps the DIP joint straight so that the tendon can heal back to the bone. If the joint bends, the healing is disrupted and the healing 'clock' starts again!



Injured tendon

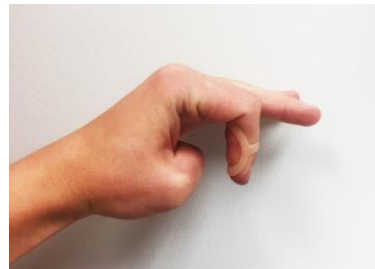


After splinting

2. **Exercise the other finger joints to keep them flexible:** The PIP joint is the middle joint. If this joint becomes stiff, then the finger will not be very functional. It is critical that you exercise this joint regularly while in the splint.



Extension



Flexion

Protect the Tendon as the Healing Matures (8-14 weeks)

1. **Nighttime Splinting:** Wear the finger splint at night for an additional 1 month to support the healing tendon.
2. **Splint with vigorous activity:** Wear the finger splint anytime the finger could be jammed again or with heavy lifting activities in order to prevent re-injury.
3. **Recurrence:** If the finger droops again, resume continuous splinting for 2 more weeks.
4. **Flexibility:** Start with gentle active DIP joint motion. Do not force the motion or push on the finger to improve motion as this may re-injure the finger.

Prognosis and Potential Problems

- **Dorsal skin breakdown or pain:** Be sure to check the skin to ensure there is no skin breakdown.
- **Cleaning your finger:** We will show you how to remove the splint and clean the involved finger without disrupting healing.
- **Comfort and function:** After completing full treatment, most people end up with little to no discomfort and good function for daily activities. Occasionally, a small droop will persist in the DIP joint (most distal joint of the finger). However, the finger is still functional.
- **Range of motion:** After completing full treatment, most people have a reasonable correction of the mallet deformity. You can usually expect a small extensor lag of 5-10 degrees (inability to fully extend at the joint) and some decreased flexion resulting from the stiffness acquired from splinting.