

DR BOB JANG

Orthopaedic Surgeon

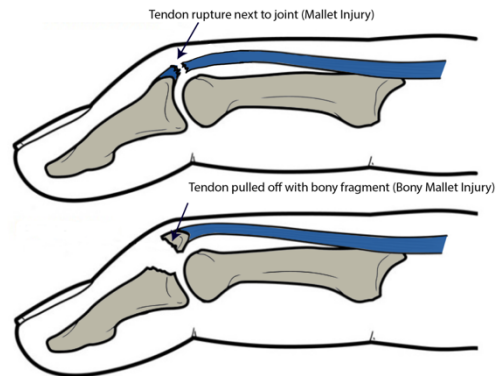
Mallet Finger Information Sheet

What is Mallet Finger?

Mallet finger, is a condition where the extensor tendon that straightens the fingertip becomes damaged or torn. This typically occurs when the fingertip is forcibly bent, such as during sports activities or accidents.

Symptoms:

1. Inability to straighten the fingertip
2. Pain and tenderness at the end of the finger
3. Swelling around the affected joint
4. Bruising may be present in some cases



Diagnosis:

Mallet finger is usually diagnosed based on physical examination and medical history. X-rays may be ordered to assess the extent of the injury and rule out any associated fractures.

Treatment Options:

1. Conservative Treatment:

Splinting: The affected finger is splinted in a straight position (extension) for 6-8 weeks to allow the tendon to heal. **Immobilisation:** It's crucial to keep the splint on continuously, only removing it for hygiene purposes. **Follow-up:** Regular follow-up appointments are necessary to monitor progress and adjust the treatment plan as needed.

2. Surgical Treatment:

In cases where the injury is severe or if conservative measures fail, surgery may be recommended. Surgical options include open reduction internal fixation (ORIF) or pinning of the fracture to restore proper alignment and stability.

Post-Operative Care:

After surgery, the finger will be immobilised in a splint or cast for a period of time determined at the time of surgery. Generally you will need a finger splint for 4 to 6 weeks minimum. Hand therapy may be prescribed to regain strength and range of motion in the finger. Follow all post-operative instructions provided by Dr Jang closely to promote optimal healing.

Recovery:

Recovery time varies depending on the severity of the injury and the chosen treatment approach. Most patients can expect a gradual return to normal activities within a few months, with full recovery typically taking several months.

Complications:

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Complications from mallet finger injuries and treatments are rare but may include stiffness, persistent pain, joint deformity, or recurrence of the injury.

Prevention:

To prevent mallet finger injuries, it's essential to use proper protective equipment during sports activities, avoid activities that put excessive stress on the fingers, and practice proper hand safety techniques.

When to Seek Medical Attention:

Seek medical attention if you experience difficulty straightening the fingertip, severe pain, or if there are signs of infection such as increased swelling, redness, or drainage from the injured finger.

Conclusion:

Mallet finger is a common injury that can significantly impact finger function if not treated promptly and effectively. With proper diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation, most patients can expect a successful recovery and a return to normal activities.

OPERATIVE TREATMENT FOR MALLET FINGER

Following a mallet finger open reduction internal fixation (ORIF) operation, it's important to adhere to a carefully structured post-operative protocol to promote optimal healing and recovery.



Day 1 - 7:

Immobilisation: The affected finger is immobilised in extension using a splint to keep the DIP joint straight.

Pain Management: Prescribe pain medication as necessary to manage post-operative discomfort.

Wound Care: Keep the surgical site clean and dry. Change dressings as needed according to the Dr Jang's instructions.

Monitor: Monitor for signs of infection, such as increased pain, redness, swelling, or drainage from the wound.

Follow-up: Schedule a follow-up appointment with Dr Jang within the two weeks for wound inspection and to assess initial healing.

Week 2 - 6:

Splint Adjustment: The splint may be adjusted to allow gentle passive range of motion exercises under the guidance of a hand therapist.

Therapy: Initiate hand therapy sessions focusing on gentle active and passive range of motion exercises for the affected finger, as well as strengthening exercises for the surrounding muscles.

Oedema Control: Continue elevation and incorporate techniques such as contrast baths or compression therapy to control swelling.

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Functional Activities: Gradually introduce light functional activities, avoiding activities that put excessive stress on the repaired tendon.

Pain Management: Continue to manage pain with medication as needed.

Week 6 - 12:

Progressive Mobilisation: Gradually increase the range of motion exercises and introduce more challenging strengthening exercises.

Scar Management: Begin scar massage and desensitisation techniques to promote optimal scar healing and reduce sensitivity.

Functional Training: Focus on regaining full range of motion and strength necessary for daily activities and work-related tasks.

Gradual Return to Activities: With clearance from Dr Jang and your Hand therapist, gradually return to activities that involve the use of the affected finger, taking care to avoid reinjury.

Continued Follow-up: Schedule regular follow-up appointments with Dr Jang and your hand therapist to monitor progress and adjust the treatment plan as necessary.

Week 12 onwards:

Full Activity: Aim for a return to full activity and function, including sports and work-related tasks, as tolerated.

Maintenance Program: Continue with a maintenance program of exercises to preserve strength, flexibility, and function of the affected finger.

Long-term Follow-up: Schedule periodic follow-up appointments with Dr Jang to monitor long-term healing and address any concerns or complications that may arise.

Emergency Contact Information: In case of emergency or if you have urgent concerns outside of regular office hours, please contact: Practice nurse mobile 0481 397 113 or contact the Orthopaedic Registrar at the public hospital where you had your procedure.

Note: These post-operative instructions are general guidelines. Dr Jang may provide additional or specific instructions based on your individual case. It's essential to follow Dr Jang's recommendations closely for the best possible outcome.

If you have any questions or need further clarification about your post-operative care, don't hesitate to reach out to your healthcare provider. We wish you a speedy and successful recovery.

Contact Information: If you have any questions, concerns, or need to schedule an appointment, please contact Dr Jang at the following:

- Phone: 02 8078 6621 (Strathfield/Bankstown), 02 9525 2055 (Caringbah)
- Email: admin@drbobjang.com.au or reception@orthocentre.com.au
- Address: Caringbah/Bankstown/Strathfield.



Fellow of the Royal Australasian
College of Surgeons



www.drbobjang.com.au

www.orthocentre.com.au

mysportsandjoints.com.au

My Sports and Joints (Strathfield)
P: 02 8078 6621 F: 02 9525 6302
E: admin@drbobjang.com.au
Suite 209, Level 2 Strathfield Plaza, 11 The Boulevard,
Strathfield, NSW, 2135

Bankstown Hospital Medical Centre
P: 02 8078 6621 F: 02 9525 6302
E: admin@drbobjang.com.au
Suite 103, 68 Eldridge Road, Bankstown, NSW, 2200

Orthocentre (Caringbah)
P: 02 9525 2055 F: 02 9525 6302
E: reception@orthocentre.com.au
Kareena Private Hospital
86 Kareena Road, Caringbah, NSW, 2229