

Hand Therapy Guide (IX)



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This is a quick reference to guide you on referrals for common hand injuries and conditions in general practice. The theme for this issue is **Trigger Finger and Trigger Thumb**.

Trigger Finger and Trigger Thumb

► Mechanism of Injury

Trigger finger or thumb is often caused by repetitive activities involving forceful gripping and use of the hand. There are several factors that can increase the risk of developing the condition including diabetes and rheumatoid arthritis. It can occur simultaneously with carpal tunnel syndrome and is more common in women.

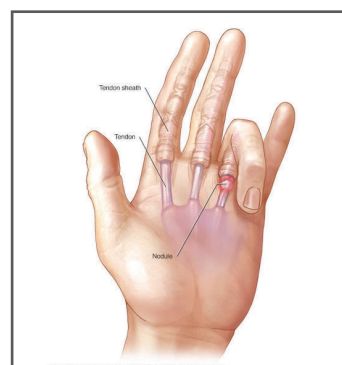


Photo source: Mayo Clinic

Trigger finger and thumb is due to inflammation of the tendon or its surrounding structures causing it to catch when moving through the protective sheath. If the trigger finger or thumb is severe, the digit can become locked in a bent position.

► Symptoms

- Catching sensation when bending or straightening the affected finger or thumb
- Pain in the palm at the base of the finger or thumb
- Thickening or a lump on the tendon
- The thumb or finger can become locked in a flexed position
- Swelling of the finger or thumb

► Diagnosis

A diagnosis is made based on a physical examination. Tendon gliding is assessed by palpating in the palm and base of the affected digit as the patient bends and straightens their fingers and thumb while checking for pain, swelling, catching or a nodule on the tendon.

► Referral

A referral should be made as soon as symptoms appear or are diagnosed.

► Treatment

Treatment options for trigger finger and trigger thumb include:

- Conservative management
- Corticosteroid injection
- Surgery

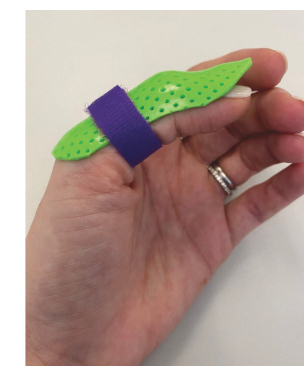
► Conservative Management

- A custom made thermoplastic finger or thumb based splint to limit range of motion and rest the affected tendon
- Activity modification education to prevent catching of the tendon
- Pain and oedema management
- As pain and catching subsides a graded exercise program to regain movement and strength will be prescribed

► Splinting



MCP Joint blocking splint for trigger finger



Controlled motion splint for the thumb allowing tendon glide without triggering

► Stay Tuned!

Next issue will be about Tuft Fractures.