



# Finger Sprain

## **What is a finger sprain?**

A sprain is an injury to a joint that causes a stretch or tear in a ligament. Ligaments are strong bands of tissue that connect one bone to another.

## **How does it occur?**

A sprain usually occurs when there is an accident. For example, a ball may hit the tip of your finger or you may fall forcefully onto your finger.

## **What are the symptoms?**

You have pain, swelling, and tenderness in your finger.

## **How is it diagnosed?**

Your health care provider will examine your finger. You may have an x-ray to be sure you have not broken any bones in your finger.

## **How is it treated?**

Treatment may include:

- ▶ applying ice packs to your finger for 20 to 30 minutes every 3 to 4 hours for 2 or 3 days or until the pain goes away
- ▶ elevating your hand on a pillow while you are lying down or on the back of a chair or couch while you are sitting (to help reduce swelling)
- ▶ taking an anti-inflammatory or other pain medication prescribed by your health care provider

- ▶ doing exercises to strengthen your finger during the healing process.

Your health care provider will recommend that your sprained finger be splinted or "buddy taped" (taped to the finger next to it) for 1 to 4 weeks after your injury.

## **When can I return to my sport or activity?**

The goal of rehabilitation is to return you to your sport or activity as soon as is safely possible. If you return too soon you may worsen your injury, which could lead to permanent damage. Everyone recovers from injury at a different rate. Return to your activity will be determined by how soon your finger recovers, not by how many days or weeks it has been since your injury occurred. In general, the longer you have symptoms before you start treatment, the longer it will take to get better.

Your finger may remain swollen with decreased range of motion and strength for many weeks. It is important to continue your rehabilitation exercises during this time and even after you return to your sport. In many cases, you will be able to return to your activities as long as you are wearing your splint or have your finger taped.

## **How I prevent a finger sprain?**

Finger sprains are usually the result of injuries that are not preventable.



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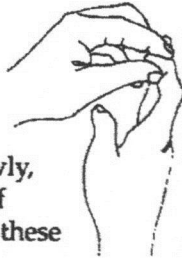
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## Finger Sprain Rehabilitation Exercises

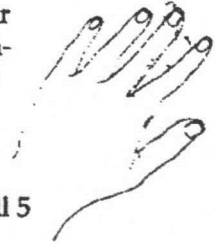
You may do all of these exercises right away.

### 1. PASSIVE RANGE OF MOTION:

Gently assist the injured joint by helping to bend it with your other hand. Gently try to straighten out the injured joint with your other hand. Repeat slowly, holding for 5 seconds at the end of each motion. Do this 10 times. Do these exercises 3 to 5 times per day.



**4. FINGER EXTENSION:** With your palm flat on a table and your fingers straight out, lift each finger straight up one at a time. Hold your finger up for 5 seconds then and put it down. Continue until you have done all 5 fingers. Repeat 10 times.



**2. FIST MAKING:** Make your hand into a fist. If the injured finger will not bend into the fist, assist it with your uninjured hand and try to help it bend into the fist. Hold this position for 5 to 10 seconds. Repeat 10 times.



**5. GRIP STRENGTHENING:** Squeeze a rubber ball and hold for 5 seconds. Do 3 sets of 10.

**3. OBJECT PICK-UP:** Practice picking up small objects such as coins, marbles, pins, or buttons with the injured finger and the thumb.

