

**Flexor Tendon Repair
The Saint John Protocol
Dr. Michael Thomas Edgerton**

***Deviations from protocol will be noted on script.**

Day 3-5 Post Op - 2 Weeks (Evaluation 3-5 days post op)

- "You can move it but you can't use it!"
- Edema control -- elevation, compression wrap
- Immobilization: DBS - wrist in 30 extension (comfortable position), MCP in 30 degrees of flexion, IP's in full extension.
- PROM flexion of MP, PIP, DIP of all digits
- Full IP joint extension with MP in full flexion
- True active flexion up to 1/3 to 1/2 fist (composite fist)
- No tension, painful or forceful movement

2-6 Weeks Post Op

- DBS shortened to Manchester short splint (wrist free with MCP and IP positioned as in original DBS)
- Active synergistic exercise program in Manchester short splint
- Patients to work toward half to full active fist and up to 45 degrees of wrist extension.
- Concentrate on achieving full IP joint extension with MP in full flexion
- Work towards achieving full fist by 6 weeks post op.

6-8 Weeks Post Op

- Manchester splint is discontinued 6 weeks post op
- Patient works on extension if lag continues
- Patients can start to use their hand for light activity based on progress with therapy
- Palm-based or digit extension splints at night if needed to correct IP joint flexion contractures
- Relative motion flexion orthoses during daytime activity are helpful
- Gentle strengthening can be initiated at 6 weeks if full motion is achieved

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Saint John's Flexor Tendon Protocol
Phase I Exercises

SPLINT

Your splint is a reminder not to use your hand and it protects your hand from being in positions that could harm your surgical repair. You are to wear your splint 24 hours per day. The splint can be removed to gently wash your arm. Your splint can be cleaned with a soapy washcloth or a Clorox wipe/baby wipe. Do not fully extend fingers or attempt to make a forceful fist when out of your splint.

EXERCISES

The following exercises are to be completed on an hourly basis during waking hours.

Exercise 1 - Passive Flexion



Use your other hand to bend each finger down to your palm bending all joints. Push finger until you feel a gentle stretch. Hold x 10 seconds. Repeat 5 times.

Exercises 2 – Active Half Fist



With your large knuckles in a slight bend (splint position), gently bend your end joints into a half fist. Hold 5 seconds. Repeat 10-15 times.

Exercise 3 - IP Joint Extension with MP flexion



Use your other hand to bend the large knuckle of your injured finger. Then, actively straighten the small joints of your finger. Hold 5 seconds. Repeat 10 times.