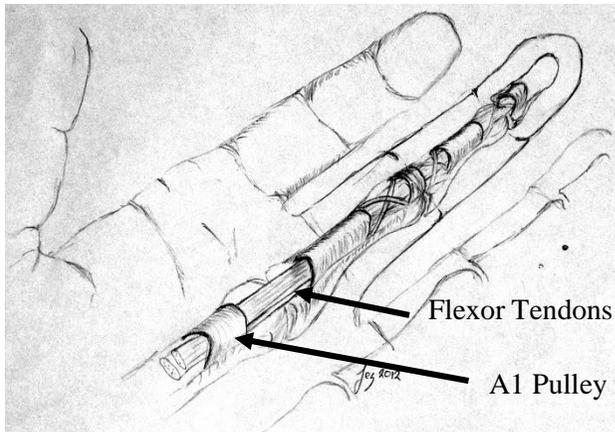


What Is Trigger Finger?

Trigger finger or Stenosing Tenosynovitis is a condition in which the affected finger or thumb clicks, catches or locks, normally in a bent position, although it may occasionally present as an inability to bend. It is caused by some wear and tear or swelling of the tendon which causes a nodule to form. The tendon runs through a fibrous tunnel called the A1 pulley, and much like trying to pull a thread through the eye of a needle when there is a knot in it, the nodule catches or locks at the mouth of the pulley.



Trigger finger usually occurs without any obvious cause, but it is more common in people with diabetes. It can also be a problem in people with rheumatoid arthritis, but is not caused by osteoarthritis. There is little evidence that it is caused by working with the hands, but heavy activity, such as manual work, gardening or DIY etc. can exacerbate the condition.

Making The Diagnosis

The diagnosis of trigger finger is usually made on the history (what you tell the doctor) and examination in clinic. It may very occasionally be necessary to investigate further with X-ray or ultrasound examinations to ensure the diagnosis is correct.

What Treatments Are There?

Rest & Activity Modification. Whilst trigger digits are annoying and can be painful they are not harmful. Some cases will settle with rest and avoiding painful activities if possible. Anti-inflammatory medication may also help.

Splints. A splint to hold the finger straight, especially at night, can allow the tendon to rest within the sheath and make it smoother.

Steroid Injection. An injection of steroid into the tendon sheath can help to relieve symptoms in about 70% of cases. This may cure the condition though occasionally a second injection is required.

Surgical Release. A small operation, normally performed under a local anaesthetic where the pulley is released to allow the tendon to run freely. This does not affect the function of the finger.

What To Expect From Surgery

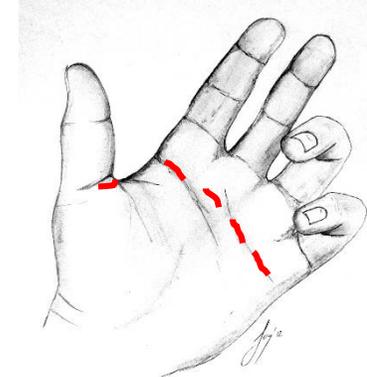
Trigger finger release is normally performed using a local anaesthetic. This means that you will be awake during the procedure and able to go home almost as soon as it is finished.

The local anaesthetic is normally given a few minutes before the operation, but may be given earlier as its effects will last several hours.

In the theatre your hand will be cleaned with an antiseptic solution. After that sterile sheets cover your arm and keep the hand clean. This will also prevent you from seeing anything if you don't want to.

A cut is made on the hand over the affected pulleys as shown on the diagram. The fibrous pulley trapping the tendon is then fully released and we can test the result at the time. The wound will be closed with dissolvable stitches, a sticky dressing and then a bulky bandage.

You can use your hand almost immediately after the surgery, but you are advised not to do any heavy lifting for 2 weeks.



You will be given some painkillers to take home. At 5 days you can remove the bulky dressing and at 10 days the sticky dressing. You can get the wound wet from 2 weeks.

After The Operation

You can drive when the bulky dressing comes off and *you can safely control the car.*

You can play sports i.e. golf and tennis after 2-3 weeks though you might still find it uncomfortable. You will be reviewed in outpatients at 6 weeks to check the wound.

What Are The Risks?

Steroid Injection carries very few risks but may lead to pain for a few days (steroid flare) & occasionally can produce permanent discolouration or thinning of the skin. It can take up to 6 weeks for a steroid to have a full effect.

All **Surgical** procedures carry some risk, these include some general ones such as **infection** (fortunately low risk for this surgery), **bleeding** & there will be a **scar**. There is a small risk of **Nerve, Tendon or vessel** injury. **Recurrence** after trigger finger release is uncommon though a higher risk in diabetics.

Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS) can lead to pain and stiffness. Taking 500mg – 1g of Vitamin C for 2 days before and for 50 days after the operation may reduce the risk.

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Availability: **Alt Wednesday**

08:00 – 12:00

Thursday evenings

18:00 – 20:00

Friday

08:00 – 12:00 or 14:00 – 18:00

(Alternate Weeks)

Appointments

0800 585112

For Self Pay Pricing Enquiries

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Trigger Finger

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