FLEXOR TENDON REPAIR – THUMB
Indiana PASSIVE Motion Program
Initial 3 Weeks Postop

The following therapy program has been custom designed for you. It is extremely important to perform each exercise as outlined in order to restore thumb function over the next 3 months.

- Perform the following exercises each 2 hours during the day (a minimum of 5 times a day). To keep it easy to remember, perform the exercises on the even hours of the day. Do not sleep more than 6-8 hours without completing an exercise session.
- Complete **15 repetitions** of each exercise within the splint – slow motion, long stretches (hold end-range for 5 seconds).

With your opposite hand, fully bend your thumb.

Straighten your thumb back to the splint.

With your opposite hand, bend the tip of your thumb.

Straighten your thumb back to the splint.
FLEXOR TENDON REPAIR – THUMB
Indiana PASSIVE Motion Program
Initial 3 Weeks Postop

Patient Education

- Wear your splint at all times! It is protecting your tendon repair. Not wearing your splint could risk tendon rupture.
- Minimizing the swelling in your hand is important. Please keep your hand elevated to heart level and avoid getting hot and sweaty (e.g. exercising, being outdoors on hot days) for the initial 3 weeks following surgery.
- Please exercise as indicated above. Increasing the number of repetitions or the frequency can result in increased swelling and scar tissue.
- Do not try to bend your thumb on your own muscle power. You could accidentally rupture (pull apart) your repair.
- It is recommended that you do not drive while wearing splints or while on pain medication.
- You may lift objects under 1 pound with your last three fingers (not your index finger-pointer finger).
- Keep your hand dry. Do not apply ointments to your sutures or any wound.
- Once your stitches are removed, you may begin scar massage with lotion 2 days later (assuming the wound is completely closed).
- Avoid pinching your fingers against your thumb in the splint.

Your physician, physician assistant, nurse, and our therapists are all committed to helping you recover from this injury. Carefully follow your home program to achieve a functional outcome.
Congratulations… you have reached the 3 week point in your therapy program! Your tendon is stronger, which allows you to begin gentle active motion (on your own muscle power).

Outlined below is your three week exercise program.

- Perform the following exercises within your splint each 2 hours during the day. Performing the exercises on the even hours of the day is easy to remember.
- Complete 10 repetitions of each exercise, pausing for 3-5 seconds once your thumb is fully bent.

**Within your splint, bend and straighten your thumb with your opposite hand.**

**Bend and straighten the joint near the tip of your thumb with your opposite hand.**

**Touch each finger on your own muscle power and straighten back to the splint.**

**Bend your thumb with your opposite hand, gently let go, and keep your thumb bent on your own muscle power. Lastly, straighten your thumb.**

**On your own muscle power, bend your thumb across your hand, touching below your little finger and straighten back to the splint.**

**With the base of your thumb strapped in the splint, bend the tip down with your opposite hand. Maintain slight pressure while trying to keep the tip bent on your own muscle power. Finish by straightening your thumb.**
FLEXOR TENDON REPAIR – THUMB
Indiana PASSIVE Motion Program
3 Weeks Postop

Additional Instruction

- _____________________________________________________________________________
- _____________________________________________________________________________
- _____________________________________________________________________________

Patient Education

- Wear your splint at all times! It is protecting your tendon repair.
- Be sure to limber up with the passive exercises before performing the light active exercises. This helps reduce the resistance on your tendon.
- You may lift objects under 1 pound with your last three fingers (not your index-pointer finger).
- Do not make a tight fist with your hand or pinch your fingers against the splint and your thumb.
- Perform scar massage with lotion 3 times a day, for 1-2 minutes.

You have already finished three weeks of home exercises. You are 1/3 of the way through your therapy program! The next three weeks are extremely important. As scar tissue is forming, we need to ensure regular intervals of gentle exercise for tendon gliding.

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FLEXOR TENDON REPAIR – THUMB
Indiana PASSIVE Motion Program
4 Weeks Postop

Congratulations... you have reached the 4-week point in your therapy program! Your tendon continues to gradually strengthen and your new exercises will begin outside of your protective splint.

Outlined below is your new four week program.

- Perform the following exercises each 2 hours during the day.
- Complete 10 repetitions of each exercise – slow motion, long stretches (5 seconds).

Limber up by bending and straightening your thumb in your splint with your opposite hand.

Bend and straighten your thumb on your own muscle power within your splint.

Remove your splint. Bend your wrist forward and back.

Touch the middle of your small finger and then gently straighten your thumb.

Bend your thumb across your palm (focusing on bending the tip) and then gently straighten your thumb.

Reapply your splint. With the base of your thumb strapped in the splint, bend the tip down with your opposite hand. Gently let go and keep your thumb bent on your own muscle power. Finish by straightening your thumb.
FLEXOR TENDON REPAIR – THUMB
Indiana PASSIVE Motion Program
4 Weeks Postop

Additional Instruction

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Patient Education

• Continue to wear your protective splint between exercise sessions and at night.
• You may lift objects up to 1 pound with your last three fingers (not your index-pointer finger).
• Do not make a tight fist with your hand or pinch your fingers against the splint and your thumb. Your tendon repair is not strong enough for resistance and the tendon could rupture under resistance.
• Perform scar massage with lotion 3 times a day, for 1-2 minutes.

You have now finished four weeks of home exercises. The next two weeks remain extremely important. Your thumb continues to heal and form scar tissue. Keeping the thumb moving and the tendon gliding on a regular basis is essential. Keep up the good work! Thank you for your commitment to your recovery.
FLEXOR TENDON REPAIR – THUMB
Indiana PASSIVE Motion Program
5 Weeks Postop

Congratulations… you have reached the 5-week point in your therapy program! You have been exercising regularly to obtain tendon gliding.

Outlined below is your five week exercise program.
- Perform the following exercises each 2 hours during the day (a minimum of 5 times a day).
- Complete 10 repetitions of each exercise – slow motion, long stretches (5 seconds).

Limber up by bending and straightening your thumb in your splint with your opposite hand.

Remove your splint. Bend your thumb across your palm (focusing on bending the tip as you cross your palm) and then straighten on your own muscle power.

Support the base of your thumb with your opposite hand. Bend and straighten your thumb.

Reapply your splint. With the base of your thumb strapped in the splint, bend the tip of your thumb down with your opposite hand. Slowly remove your hand, keeping your thumb bent on your own muscle power.
FLEXOR TENDON REPAIR – THUMB
Indiana PASSIVE Motion Program
5 Weeks Postop

Additional Instruction

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Patient Education

- Continue to wear your protective splint between exercises and at night.
- You may lift objects up to 2 pounds with your last three fingers (not your index-pointer finger).
- Do not make a tight fist with your hand or pinch your fingers against the splint and your thumb.
- Perform scar massage with lotion 3 times a day, for 1-2 minutes.

You have now finished five weeks of home exercises. Your tendon continues to strengthen, yet it will not tolerate normal use until 3 months following surgery. To heal, your body continues to create and remodel scar tissue. For this reason, it is extremely important to continue performing the exercises on an intermittent and regular basis. We realize this is somewhat of an endurance contest… but you can do it!
FLEXOR TENDON REPAIR – THUMB
Indiana PASSIVE Motion Program
6 Weeks Postop

Congratulations... You have reached the 6-week point in your therapy program! You are more than halfway through your rehab program. Your protective splint is discontinued at this time.

Outlined below is your six week exercise program.
- Perform the following exercises each 2 hours during the day (a minimum of 5 times a day).
- Complete 10 repetitions of each exercise – slowly.

1. **Limber up by bending and straightening your thumb with your opposite hand.**
2. **On your own muscle power, bend your thumb across your palm with focus on bending the tip down, and then straighten.**
3. **If you have been fitted with a new splint, bend and straighten your thumb within the splint.**
4. **Stabilize the back knuckle with your opposite hand (with your thumb away from your palm). Gently bend and straighten the tip of your thumb.**
5. **With your opposite hand, gently straighten the tip of your thumb while holding the back knuckle (MP joint) bent across your palm.**
6. **Wear the splint during the waking hours of the day.**
FLEXOR TENDON REPAIR – THUMB
Indiana PASSIVE Motion Program
6 Weeks Postop

Additional Instruction

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Patient Education

- Wear your new splint during the waking hours of the day.
- You may lift objects up to 5 pounds with your hand. (Note: a gallon jug of milk is +8 pounds!)
- Avoid making a tight fist with your hand.
- Do not pinch objects or pull apart objects with your thumb and fingers. (Avoid pinching activities greater than turning on the ignition of a car).
- Avoid a tight, sustained pinch against any resistance for 3 months from surgery (very important).
- Perform scar massage with lotion 3 times a day, for 1-2 minutes.

You have now finished six weeks of home exercises. Your tendon continues to strengthen, yet it will not tolerate normal use until 3 months following surgery. To heal, your body continues to create and remodel scar tissue. Continuing to perform the exercises on an intermittent and regular basis is extremely important.
Congratulations… you are now 8 weeks since surgery! From our perspective, your commitment to your therapy program is something to be proud of. It is anticipated you are achieving functional motion with your thumb at this point.

Outlined below is your last set of formal exercises.

- Remove your hand-based splint to complete these exercises. [Note: The hand-based splint is discontinued so long as you have achieved functional motion.]
- Perform the following exercises each 3 hours during the day.
- Complete 15 repetitions of each exercise – slowly.

Bend and straighten your thumb across your palm, focusing on bending the tip.

Stabilize the back knuckle with your opposite hand. Bend and straighten the tip, holding the end-range to a count of 5.

Bend your wrist back. Straighten your thumb with your opposite hand.

Pinch the putty. In one week, you may pinch and pull the putty.

Bend your thumb into the putty. [Perform both of the putty exercises for a total of < 5 minutes.]
FLEXOR TENDON REPAIR – THUMB
Indiana PASSIVE Motion Program
8 Weeks Postop

Additional Instruction

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Patient Education

• Wear your splint during the waking hours of the day (if your therapist recommends you continue the splint).
• You may lift objects up to 8 pounds with your hand.
• Avoid making a tight fist against resistance.
• Do not pinch objects or pull apart objects with your thumb and fingers. (No pinching activity greater than turning on a car ignition).
• Avoid a tight, sustained pinch against resistance for 3 months from surgery (very important).

You have now finished eight weeks of home exercises. To heal, your body continues to create and remodel scar tissue. Continuing to perform the exercises on an intermittent and regular basis is extremely important. Your tendon continues to strengthen, yet it will not tolerate normal use until 3 months following surgery.