



Extensor Tendon Repair (Wrist/Forearm)

Patient Postoperative Instructions

Laith Al-Shihabi, MD

0-2 week

Post-op Dressings:

- Keep the dressings and splint in place until your first postoperative visit.
- Elevation of the hand, along with ice on-and-off for 20 minutes at a time, will help with swelling and pain.
- It is ok to shower, but the dressings must stay clean and dry. Place a waterproof covering over the dressings while bathing or showering (such as a heavy plastic bag that is sealed with Saran wrap).
- If the dressings get dirty, wet, or come apart please contact the office to have the dressing re-done.

Motion:

- Start moving your fingers and thumb that are not in the splint as soon as possible.
- Also work on moving your palm up (supination) and palm down (pronation), along with flexing and extending your wrist.
- You can use the un-splinted fingers of your hand for light activity, such as eating, drinking, or using a computer.
- Do not lift, carry, push, or pull anything heavier than a glass of water or can of soda.

2-6 weeks (First post-op and therapy visit)

Splint:

- The postoperative splint and stitches will be removed at your 1-week visit, and you will be placed in to a splint by therapy for continuous wear.
- You can begin gentle scar massage at 3 weeks after surgery.
- The splint can come off for motion exercises or to wash the hand, but otherwise should be worn full-time.

Motion:

- Therapy will be started to focus on recovery of motion.
- Continue to avoid lifting, carrying, pushing, or pulling anything heavier than a glass of water.

6-10 weeks (Second post-op visit)

Splint:

- Wean from the splint starting at 6 weeks.

Motion:

- Continue active flexion, and begin active extension exercises.
- Begin passive stretching of the injured tendons.
- Begin gentle strengthening at 8 weeks.
- You can lift/carry up to 5lbs (about 1/2 gallon of milk) as your symptoms allow at 6 weeks.
- You can lift/carry up to 10-15 lbs starting at 10 weeks.
- Transition to a home therapy program by 10 weeks.

10+ weeks (Third post-op visit)

Splint:

- The post-operative splint should no longer be necessary.
- If necessary, dynamic splinting to help recover motion can be used.

Motion:

- Continue active motion exercises to the finger.
- Continue strengthening of the injured tendons.
- There are no further activity restrictions after 12 weeks unless otherwise discussed on a case-by-case basis.