

Trigger Finger

What is Trigger finger?

Trigger finger is a common hand condition. Triggering of the finger or thumb develops when the tendon that bends the finger is unable to glide freely because of a nodule or swelling. This causes the tendon to catch on the pulley at the base of the finger in the palm. The finger may “lock” or “trigger” suddenly following attempt to make a fist and then extend with a “snap”.

Who does Trigger finger affect?

Triggering occurs most commonly in the thumb followed with decreasing incidence in the ring, little and index fingers. Trigger finger occurs most commonly in middle aged females. It is also reported to be more common in those with Rheumatoid Arthritis, Diabetes, Dupuytren's Contracture and repetitive trauma. Trigger finger commonly co-exists with Carpal Tunnel Syndrome.

Treatment

Treatment of this condition is directed at restoring normal tendon gliding. If the triggering symptoms have been present for less than 6 months approximately, successful treatment can be achieved by Hand Therapy. Your Hand Therapist will make you a custom thermoplastic splint to rest the tendon and prescribe tendon gliding exercises. Usually symptoms will resolve within 6-8 weeks of splinting. If the triggering fails to respond to therapy your Hand Therapist may refer you for Cortisone injection or discuss an alternative treatment called iontophoresis. This is a pain free side effect free alternative to cortisone injection. Failing these measures your Hand Therapist may recommend a surgical consultation to consider release of the pulley.

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