



## TUFT FRACTURES

### ABOUT

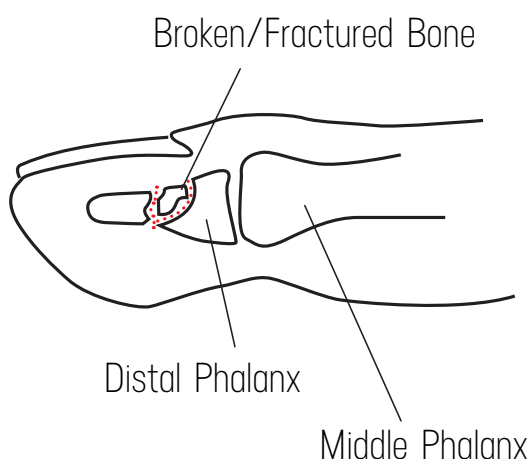
A tuft fracture is a type of fracture involving the distal phalanx of your fingers or thumb. The distal phalanx is the bone located right at the end of each of your fingers and thumb. A tuft fracture in general can be described as a stable type of fracture, as the break is at the edge of the bone beyond where the tendons insert. Tuft fractures are often caused by a crush injury, e.g. hammering the fingertips, dropping a heavy weight on it or getting it caught in a car door.

### SYMPTOMS

- Bruising and swelling at the fingertip
- May also have an injury to the nail/nail bed or pad of the fingertip
- Pain and hypersensitivity at the tip of the finger

Tuft fractures can occur with injuries to the nail bed, which may require surgery to repair or a wash out to minimise the risk of infection. To help diagnose the injury as well as assess the location and stability of the fracture, an x-ray will need to be taken to guide treatment. The fracture alone usually does not require surgery, however on occasions may be used for stability and to assist wound healing.

### TUFT FRACTURE



# HOW HAND THERAPY CAN HELP

Tuft fractures and crush injuries are associated with sensitivity and tenderness of the injured area. Tuft fractures are usually tender for longer than a crush injury that is not associated with any break of the bone. An orthosis can help protect the injury, reduce swelling and pain as it protects it from knocks. This may help to allow you to continue work as well as to continue on with life in general as fingertips and thumb tips are used in so many of our everyday activities.

Fingertips are a very sensitive area of the body. After an injury causing a tuft fracture, these areas can become extra sensitive or uncomfortable to touch. However, the longer we protect it or don't touch the area at all, it can sometimes become even more sensitive to touch. To minimise this, your therapist will likely start you on gentle desensitisation exercises early on.

Therapists can assist and guide you from the day of injury to complete recovery. After a tuft fracture or a crush injury, your therapist will assess your skin, any wounds, swelling, movement, your sensitivity to touch and will ask you questions about your lifestyle and current pain levels to help design an orthosis that is right for you. An individualised program will be developed for you by your therapist that may involve a variety of exercises (e.g. for range of motion, desensitisation), swelling control, orthosis and skin care regime. Every time you visit your therapist, they will use their updated assessment findings to reassess the dose of your home program and orthosis wearing regime and modify it as necessary to help achieve the optimal outcome.



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