

Extensor Tendon Injuries of the Hand

Extensor tendons allow you to straighten your fingers. These tendons attach to muscles in your lower arm and extend just under the skin on the back of your hands and fingers. The tendons are easily injured because they are so close to the surface of the skin.

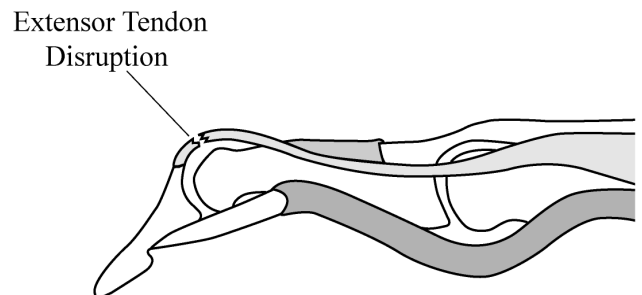
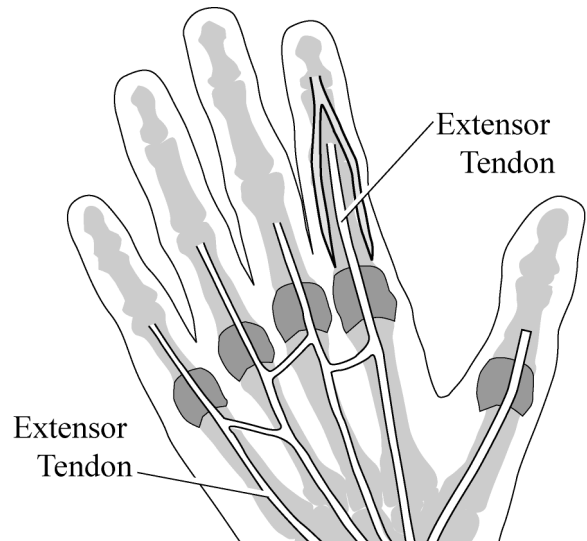
Signs of Injury

Pain and problems with straightening one or more joints in the finger are the most common signs of injury to the tendon.

Common Injuries

Injuries to the extensor tendons are most often caused by cuts on the back of the hand or fingers and jammed fingers. The tendons may be cut or pulled away from the bone.

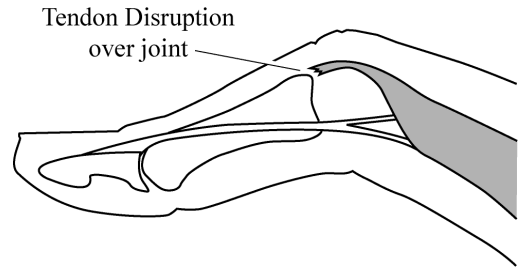
If the injury is to the last finger joint, it can cause the finger tip to droop, or not straighten. This is called a **mallet finger**.



More on next page →

Learn more about your health care.

If the injury is to the middle joint of the finger, it can cause the middle bone of the finger to bend and the end joint bends backwards. This is called the **boutonniere deformity**.

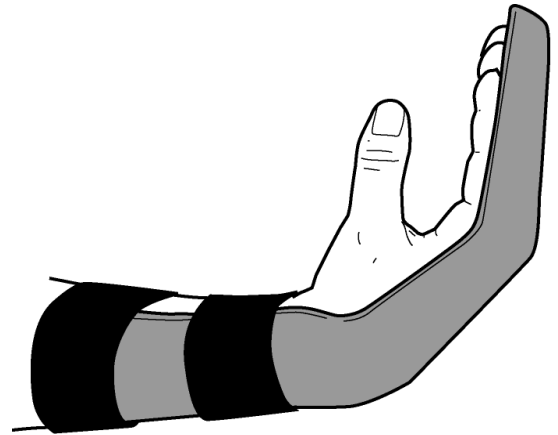


Treatment

Based on the injury, treatment may include:

- Stitches for cut tendons
- Splinting to limit movement to allow healing
- Hand therapy after healing

The size and extent of the splint is based on the type of injury. Be sure to wear the splint as directed by your doctor and therapist or the tendon may not heal properly. Most often the splint is to be worn at all times for at least 4 to 8 weeks.



What to Expect after an Injury

Treatment can return use of the tendon. As the tendon heals, it may attach itself to the bone, limiting motion. Scar tissue also forms as part of the healing process. The scar tissue may limit full bending or straightening of the joint. Hand therapy may improve motion. In some cases, more surgery may be needed to remove scar tissue.

- ✦ **Talk to your doctor or others on your health care team if you have questions. You may request more written information from the Library for Health Information at (614) 293-3707 or email: health-info@osu.edu.**