



Extensor Tendon Transfer (Wrist and/or Fingers) Patient Postoperative Instructions Laith Al-Shihabi, MD

0-2 weeks

Pain medication:

- Use your prescription pain medication as needed to control pain.
- If your arm was numbed (blocked) for the surgery by the anesthesiologist, begin taking pain medication before the block wears off.
- Do not drive or operate machinery while taking narcotic/opioid pain medication.
- Unless you cannot take them for other medical reasons, it is ok to use over-the-counter anti-inflammatory medication (e.g. Advil or Aleve) in addition to your prescription pain medication. Do not take tylenol as your prescription already contains this medication.

Post-op Dressings:

- Keep the dressings and splint in place until your first therapy 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.
- You can use your hand for light activity, such as eating, drinking, or using a computer.
- Do not lift, carry, push, or pull anything heavier than a small glass of water.

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

Schedule a visit to see hand therapy at 2 week after surgery.

Splint:

- The postoperative splint and stitches will be removed.
- You will be placed in to a removable wrist and finger splint by your therapist to be worn during the day and with therapy.
- You will also be given a resting night splint to wear with sleep.
- Begin scar massage at the 3 week mark.

Motion:

- Therapy will be started for finger active range of motion exercises, focusing primarily on middle and end joints of the fingers.
- At 4 weeks additional exercises for active wrist and finger motion will be added.
- Continue to avoid lifting, carrying, pushing, or pulling anything heavier than a glass of water.

6 -10 weeks (Second post-op visit)

Splint:

- Discontinue use of the splint during the day.
- Continue use of the night splint up to 10 weeks.

Motion:

- Begin passive stretching in addition to active motion.
- Begin gentle strengthening using putty at 8 weeks after surgery.
- You can lift/carry up to 5lbs (about 1/2 gallon of milk) as your symptoms allow at 8 weeks.
- You can lift/carry up to 10 lbs starting at 10 weeks.
- Transition to a home exercise program.

10-12 weeks (Third post-op visit)

Splint:

- None necessary unless determined on a case-by-case basis.

Motion:

- Continue finger and forearm strengthening at home.
- No lifting/carrying restrictions.