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MALLET FINGER

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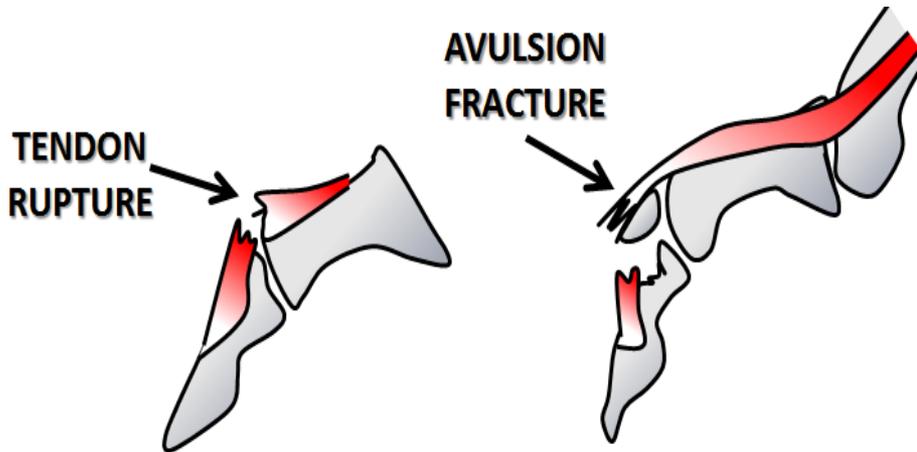
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What is mallet finger?

A deformity caused when the extensor tendon is damaged at the tip of the finger or thumb, and the finger or thumb cannot be fully straightened. When an object strikes the tip of the finger or thumb, the force damages the thin tendon that straightens the finger. The force of the blow may even pull away a piece of bone along with the tendon.



Modified from AAOS

What are the symptoms?

- The finger is painful, swollen, and bruised
- The fingertip may droop
- Blood may collect beneath the nail, or the nail can detach from the nailbed.

What tests will I need?

- **X-Rays:** to rule out any fractures or misalignment that might be causing your symptoms.

How is it treated?

- **Splinting:** The majority of mallet finger injuries can be treated without surgery. You will wear a brace that holds the end finger joint straight for 6 weeks. After the first 6 weeks, you will wear the splint at night only and will begin range of motion exercises. Although the finger usually regains function and appearance, many patients may not regain full fingertip extension.
- **Surgery:** repair may be considered if the tendon is cut, with large fractures, or joint misalignment. Surgery can include tightening the stretched tendon tissue, using tendon grafts, or fusing the joint straight.

What do I need to know about surgery?

- You will be contacted within 2 weeks of your pre-op appointment for pricing and scheduling.
- The surgery will last 60 minutes and you will go home the same day.
- Your surgeon will make an incision over the top of the finger. A wire or pin may be inserted through the tip of the finger to hold it straight until the tendon heals.
- You will have a splint for 6 weeks that will keep your finger end joint from moving. You should move the finger joints that are not injured to prevent stiffness.
- You will not be able to lift anything with the affected hand for 8-12 weeks.
- At your 2 week follow up visit, the sutures and bandage will be removed, and you will begin scar massage.
- You may require occupational therapy after surgery to help restore your range of motion.