

Finger Sprains

Diagnosis Explanation:

A **finger sprain** occurs when the **ligaments that stabilize the finger joints are overstretched or torn**, typically due to **falls, sports injuries, or forceful impacts**. It most commonly affects the **proximal interphalangeal (PIP) joint** or the **metacarpophalangeal (MCP) joint**.

Grades of Finger Sprains:

- **Grade 1 (Mild):** Ligament is stretched but intact; mild pain and swelling.
- **Grade 2 (Moderate):** Partial ligament tear; noticeable pain, swelling, and instability.
- **Grade 3 (Severe):** Complete ligament tear; significant pain, instability, and possible joint deformity.

Symptoms:

- **Pain and swelling** around the affected joint.
- **Bruising and tenderness** along the finger.
- **Difficulty moving or bending the finger.**
- **Instability or weakness in gripping objects.**

Specific Work Modifications:

- **If your job involves typing or writing:** Use **voice dictation software** and take **frequent breaks** to stretch the hand.
- **If your job requires manual labor:** Avoid **gripping, pulling, or using vibrating tools**.
- **If your job is desk-based:** Use an **ergonomic keyboard and mouse**, and keep the **hand elevated** to reduce swelling.
- **Avoid:** Forceful gripping, repetitive hand use, and tasks that strain the injured finger.

Specific Activity Modifications:

- **If you play sports:** Avoid **ball-handling sports (basketball, volleyball, tennis) and activities requiring strong grip strength**.
- **If you play an instrument:** Modify technique to reduce pressure on the injured finger.
- **If you do crafting, gardening, or cooking:** Use **larger-handled tools** to reduce strain.
- **Avoid:** High-impact activities, repetitive gripping, and forceful pushing motions.

Recommended Supplements:

- **Collagen Peptides** - 10g daily for ligament and joint repair.

- **Vitamin C** - 500mg daily to support collagen synthesis.
- **Glucosamine & Chondroitin** - 1500mg/1200mg daily for joint lubrication and ligament health.
- **Omega-3 Fatty Acids** - 1000mg daily to reduce inflammation.
- **Turmeric (Curcumin)** - 500-1000mg daily for pain relief.

Recommended Nutrition and Hydration:

- **Increase Lean Protein** (chicken, fish, tofu, eggs) to support ligament healing.
- **Eat Anti-Inflammatory Foods** (berries, leafy greens, turmeric, nuts) to reduce swelling.
- **Consume Hydrating Foods** (cucumber, watermelon, citrus) to maintain joint lubrication.
- **Limit Processed Foods & Sugars** to prevent inflammation.
- **Hydration:** Drink **8-10 cups of water daily** to support joint function.

Home Exercise Prescription (Rehabilitation for Finger Sprain)

Early Phase (0-2 Weeks, Reducing Pain & Protecting the Joint):

- **RICE Protocol** - Rest, Ice (15-20 min, 3x/day), Compression (taping or buddy splinting), Elevation.
- **Finger Splinting** - Buddy tape the injured finger to the adjacent one if needed for support.
- **Passive Finger Flexion & Extension** - Use the opposite hand to gently bend and straighten the injured finger, **10 reps, 2x/day**.

Strengthening Phase (2-6 Weeks, Restoring Mobility & Function):

- **Towel Scrunches** - Place a towel on a flat surface, use fingers to scrunch it, **10 reps, 2x/day**.
- **Finger Lifts** - Place hand flat, lift each finger individually, **10 reps per finger, 2x/day**.
- **Rubber Band Finger Extensions** - Wrap a rubber band around fingers, open hand against resistance, **10 reps, 2x/day**.

Advanced Phase (6+ Weeks, Preventing Recurrence & Maintaining Function):

- **Grip Strengthening (Soft Ball Squeeze)** - Squeeze a soft ball **5 seconds, repeat 10 reps, 2x/day**.
- **Finger-to-Thumb Opposition** - Touch thumb to each fingertip, **10 reps, 2x/day**.
- **Wrist Circles** - Slowly rotate wrists in both directions, **10 reps, 2x/day**.

Helpful Books:

1. *The Hand and Wrist Pain Solution: Simple Exercises for Relief* - Dr. Ross Clifford.
2. *Arthritis and Hand Therapy: A Self-Help Guide to Managing Joint Pain* - Susan J.

Barnhart, PT.

Click here for more orthopedic patient information.

Contact a Key West orthopedic clinic or reach out to Dr. Jason Pirozzolo.