

Trigger Finger

Diagnosis Explanation:

Trigger finger occurs when the **flexor tendon in the finger becomes inflamed**, causing the finger to **catch, lock, or "snap" when bent and straightened**. This happens due to **thickening of the tendon sheath (A1 pulley)**, which restricts smooth tendon movement. It is commonly caused by **repetitive gripping, prolonged inflammation, or conditions like diabetes and arthritis**.

Symptoms:

- **Pain and tenderness** at the base of the affected finger.
- **Clicking or popping sensation** when moving the finger.
- **Finger gets "stuck" in a bent position** and then suddenly releases.
- **Swelling or a small bump (nodule)** in the palm.
- **Morning stiffness** that improves throughout the day.

Specific Work Modifications:

- **If your job involves typing or writing:** Use **voice dictation software**, ergonomic keyboard, and take **frequent breaks**.
- **If your job requires manual labor:** Avoid **repetitive gripping, forceful pinching, and vibration tools**. Use **adaptive tools** with larger grips.
- **If your job is desk-based:** Keep wrists and hands **relaxed**, use **wrist rests**, and take **stretching breaks every 30 minutes**.
- **Avoid:** Prolonged finger flexion, repetitive gripping, and high-impact hand activities.

Specific Activity Modifications:

- **If you play an instrument or craft:** Modify grip positions, take breaks, and use **larger-handled tools**.
- **If you play sports:** Avoid **racket sports, weightlifting, and gripping-heavy activities** until symptoms improve.
- **If you do gardening or cooking:** Use **ergonomic tools** with soft, padded handles.
- **Avoid:** Repetitive pinching, gripping, and forceful pulling motions.

Recommended Supplements:

- **Collagen Peptides** - 10g daily to support tendon and joint health.
- **Vitamin B6** - 50-100mg daily to reduce inflammation in tendons.
- **Omega-3 Fatty Acids** - 1000mg daily to reduce joint and tendon swelling.
- **Turmeric (Curcumin)** - 500-1000mg daily for natural pain relief.
- **Magnesium** - 300-400mg daily to support muscle relaxation and tendon function.

Recommended Nutrition and Hydration:

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

Home Exercise Prescription (Rehabilitation for Trigger Finger)

Early Phase (0-2 Weeks, Reducing Pain & Preventing Locking):

- **RICE Protocol** - Rest, Ice (15-20 min, 3x/day), Compression, Elevation.
- **Finger Splinting (if needed)** - Wear a **finger splint at night** to prevent excessive bending.
- **Passive Finger Extension Stretch** - Gently straighten the affected finger using the opposite hand, **hold 10 seconds, repeat 10 reps, 2x/day**.

Strengthening Phase (2-6 Weeks, Improving Flexibility & 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 & Strengthening Grip):

- **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 Strengthening (Light Resistance Band)** - Strengthen wrist and forearm muscles, **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.