

WHAT TO EXPECT WITH A MALLET FINGER

Mallet finger is common to my practice and I have found the results of treatment to be consistent and reliable. Most patients do not need surgery for this injury, however, keep in mind that every person responds differently to treatment, and your recovery may vary from the outline below. Factors which influence the recovery process include:

- Your age and health.
- The severity and nature of your injury
- The length of time between the injury and the surgery
- Your compliance with prescribed treatment and therapy



1. ***MOST PATIENTS DO NOT NEED SURGERY FOR THIS INJURY:*** We treat most mallet fingers non-operatively. The treatment in this case consists of a full time splint for 6 weeks, followed by nighttime splinting for an additional 6 weeks. The results of this treatment are typically as good as surgical management, without the risks associated with surgery.
2. ***IF YOU DO HAVE SURGERY:*** The surgery for mallet finger consists of pinning the joint in extension. In this case the pin acts as an internal splint. We try to keep this pin in for 5-6 weeks, and then we remove it in clinic. After this initial 6 weeks you will be in a splint at night for an additional 6 weeks.
3. ***AFTER SURGERY:*** You should **to ice and elevate your hand** as much as possible in the first 48 hours after surgery. You will be provided with pain medication, and can supplement with Tylenol. You will keep the finger splint/dressings on until your first follow up visit at one week. Do not remove the splint or get it wet. You may use a kitchen garbage bag and tape to keep it dry in the shower/bathtub. **Avoid heavy lifting/heavy grip.**
4. ***AT YOUR ONE WEEK POST OP OFFICE VISIT:*** We will check your pin site. We will provide you with a finger splint that will protect the tip of the finger while allowing you to use the remainder of you hand. **No heavy lifting/grip with your operative hand.**
5. ***4-6 WEEKS AFTER SURGERY:*** We will pull the pin in the office. This is minimally painful. We will discuss timeframe for continuing the splint at this visit.
6. ***EIGHT WEEKS AFTER SURGERY:*** We will see you back in our clinic for a repeat exam. We will determine if physical therapy is needed at this time.
7. ***HOW LONG TO GET BETTER?*** Most people are **mostly** better by twelve weeks after this injury. You can typically return to all your normal activities at this time. Regardless of the treatment most people will continue to have some difficulty getting their finger completely straight.

Should you have any questions, please call any of our offices at the following numbers:

Edwards (970) 569-3240

Frisco (970) 668-3633

Vail (970) 476-7220