

# Trigger Finger

## Trigger Finger

Trigger finger occurs when the space between the tendon and the pulley of the finger becomes smaller, preventing the tendons to glide smoothly through the pulley system. As the tendon squeezes through the pulley system, the finger becomes stuck in a bent position resulting in a “locking” effect. Triggering of the thumb is called trigger thumb.



## Symptoms of Trigger Finger

The early symptoms of trigger finger can be a dull or painless locking of the finger. Tenderness or a small lump at the base of the finger may be present. Trigger finger of the thumb, middle and ring finger are the most common.



As the condition worsens, you may find it painful to open or close the finger. Activities such as writing, holding a knife, washing the dishes and wringing the cloth can become difficult to perform.



## Causes of Trigger Finger

Trigger finger is associated with the overuse of the hands for gripping and grasping activities. Most trigger fingers however usually arise from unknown causes. People with diabetes may have a higher risk for trigger finger.

## How Can a Hand Occupational Therapist Help You?

A hand occupational therapist will explore with you your daily activities and suggest ways for you to modify them to relieve your symptoms. To reduce irritation to your finger, a splint may be issued to prevent undesired movements of your finger.



### Useful Tips

- Explore and modify - Identify the activities you are doing that will influence the onset and intensity of your discomfort.
- Simplify your work - Plan and prioritise your day, keep things organised and take scheduled breaks in between work.
- Minimise the amount of force necessary to complete the job - Avoid prolonged squeezing, pinching, gripping, and grip strengthening.
- Wear a splint for night and/or during the day.
- Do not massage too hard on the affected finger.



Contributed by Occupational Therapy, Rehabilitation, Allied Health Services

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