

# Finger Dislocation

## **What is a finger dislocation?**

A finger dislocation is a displacement of the bones of the finger from their normal position.

## **How does it occur?**

A dislocation usually occurs when there is an accident such as a ball striking the tip of the finger or a person falling forcefully onto a finger or getting a finger hooked into a piece of equipment like a football mask or a basketball net.

## **What are the symptoms?**

In a dislocation there is immediate pain and swelling. The finger looks swollen and crooked. You will usually be unable to bend or straighten the dislocated joint.

## **How is it diagnosed?**

Your health care provider will examine your finger. An x-ray will be taken to confirm the dislocation and to determine if there is also a break in your finger.

## **How is it treated?**

Your health care provider will realign the dislocated bones. Your finger will be placed in a protective splint for several weeks.

Your finger will most likely be swollen after the dislocation. You should apply ice packs to your finger for 20 to 30 minutes every 3 to 4 hours for 2 or 3 days or until the pain goes away. Your hand should be elevated on a pillow while you are lying down or on the back of a chair or couch while you are sitting. Your health care provider may prescribe an anti-inflammatory medication. You will be given exercises to strengthen your finger during the healing process.

## **When can I return to my sport or activity?**

The goal of rehabilitation is to return you to your sport or activity as soon as is safely possible. If you return too soon you may worsen

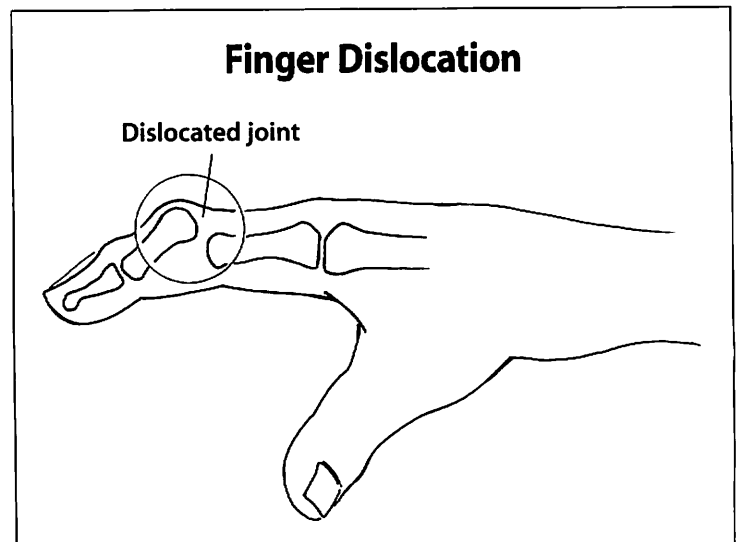
your injury, which could lead to permanent damage. Everyone recovers from injury at a different rate. Return to your activity will be determined by how soon the your finger recovers, not by how many days or weeks it has been since your injury occurred.

Your health care provider will recommend that your dislocated finger be splinted or "buddy taped" (taped to the finger next to it) for 3 to 6 weeks after your injury. In many cases, you will be able to return to your sport or activity as long as you are wearing your splint or have your finger taped.

Your finger may remain swollen with decreased range of motion and strength for many weeks. It is important to continue your rehabilitation exercises during this time and even after you return to your sport or activity.

## **How can I prevent finger dislocation?**

Finger dislocations are usually the result of accidents that are not preventable. However, whenever possible you should try to avoid getting your finger stuck in objects such as helmets, nets, or athletic jerseys.

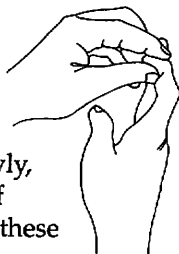


## Finger Dislocation Rehabilitation Exercises

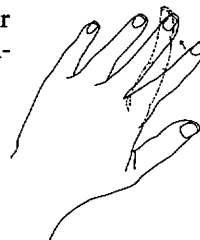
You may do all of these exercises right away.

### 1. PASSIVE RANGE OF MOTION:

Gently assist the injured joint by helping to bend it with your other hand. Gently try to straighten out the injured joint with your other hand. Repeat slowly, holding for 5 seconds at the end of each motion. Do this 10 times. Do these exercises 3 to 5 times per day.



**4. FINGER EXTENSION:** With your palm flat on a table and your fingers straight out, lift each finger straight up one at a time. Hold your finger up for 5 seconds then and put it down. Continue until you have done all 5 fingers. Repeat 10 times.



**2. FIST MAKING:** Make your hand into a fist. If the injured finger will not bend into the fist, assist it with your uninjured hand and try to help it bend into the fist. Hold this position for 5 to 10 seconds. Repeat 10 times.



**5. GRIP STRENGTHENING:** Squeeze a rubber ball and hold for 5 seconds. Do 3 sets of 10.

**3. OBJECT PICK-UP:** Practice picking up small objects such as coins, marbles, pins, or buttons with the injured finger and the thumb.

