

Finger Fracture

What is a finger fracture?

A fracture is a break in a bone. When you break your finger the break may be small or large, may be straight or crooked, and may go into the joint (the place where 2 finger bones meet).

How does it occur?

A finger fracture usually occurs from hitting a hard object with your finger, being hit by a ball, getting slammed in a door, or falling onto your hand.

What are the symptoms?

You will have pain, swelling and tenderness on the finger that is injured. You may have difficulty moving that finger and it may look crooked.

How is it diagnosed?

Your health care provider will review your symptoms, ask about how the injury occurred, and examine you. An x-ray of your finger will be taken. The x-ray will show if there is a break.

How is it treated?

If the broken bone is crooked your provider will straighten it. Then a splint will be placed on your finger. Depending on the type of fracture the splint may be placed on the bottom surface of your finger or the top surface. Your provider will decide if your finger should be kept straight or slightly bent. You will need to wear this splint for 3 to 6 weeks, depending on your injury. Some finger fractures don't need to be splinted, they only need to be taped to the finger next to it (called "buddy taping").

Fractures that are large, crooked, or go into the joint may need surgery.

Treatment will also include:

- ▶ Elevating your finger by placing your hand on a pillow when you sleep or the back of a couch when you are sitting down.
- ▶ Putting an ice bag on your injured finger for 20 to 30 minutes every 3 to 4 hours for the first 2 to 3 days.

- ▶ Taking anti-inflammatory medication or other medication prescribed by your provider.

What are the complications?

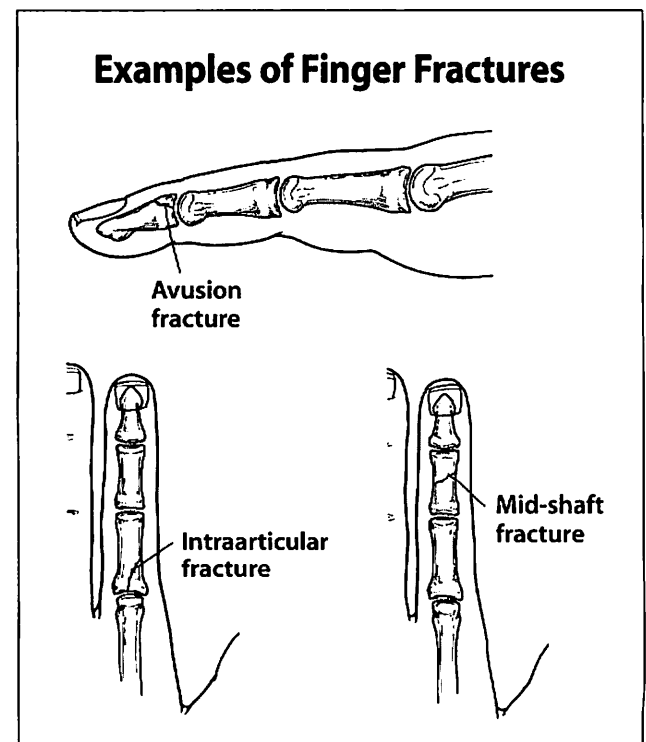
Even small fractures may cause swelling in the joints where the injury is. Sometimes this swelling may take weeks or months to go away, and in some cases may be permanent. Some fingers are crooked when the fracture heals.

When can I return to my sport or activity?

You may start your rehabilitation exercises when your provider has told you that your fracture has healed. Your provider will order a follow-up x-ray if you need one.

Small fractures may not need a follow up x-ray.

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 sport or activity will be determined by how soon your hand recovers, not by how many days or weeks it has been since your injury occurred. In general, the longer you have symptoms before you start treatment, the longer it will take to get better.

You may return to your sport or activity when your finger has full range of motion without pain and

has the same strength as the uninjured side. You may be able to participate in some activities while wearing a splint or while your finger is buddy-taped.

How can I prevent a finger fracture?

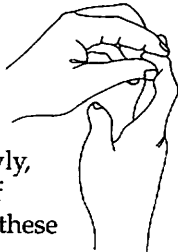
Most finger fractures happen from accidents that are not preventable.

Finger Fracture Rehabilitation Exercises

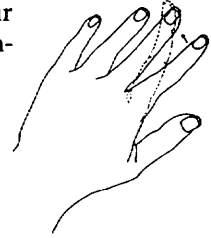
You may do all of these exercises after you no longer need the splint or tape on your finger.

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.

