

Trigger Finger/Thumb

Surgical Release

Trigger finger is a painful condition in which a finger or thumb clicks or locks as it is bent towards the palm. For more information on Trigger Finger/Thumb see our information sheet on www.sussexmskpartnershipcentral.co.uk/hand-wrist-help-with-your-diagnosed-condition/

Surgical Trigger Finger/Thumb Release

- **This involves a small incision at the base of the finger**, and release of the tight strap over the tendon at the base of the finger.
- **It is usually carried out under a local anaesthetic** as a day/outpatient procedure and takes around 15 minutes.
- **The wound will require a small dressing and bandage for 7-14 days**, but light use of the hand is possible from the day of surgery and active use of the digit will aid the recovery of movement.

Milestones

- From 0-2 weeks – You will be in a bandage but able to move your fingers to prevent stiffness
- From 2 weeks- The bandage is removed, movement of the hand and wrist is encouraged. You may be able to use your hand form light activity and return to work (sedentary work)
- From 2 weeks – You may be able to return to driving dependent on pain levels, and which hand had surgery (for gearstick and hand brake)
- 6 weeks- Most people are back to normal activities
- 3 months- Full return to sport and activities

Risks and Consequences

Finger Joint Stiffness (Proximal Interphalangeal Joint)	Likely	If the triggering has been longstanding it can take some time and exercise to regain full movement of the finger
Swelling, Stiffness and Scar Pain	Likely	Localised swelling and stiffness following surgery can be reduced by elevating the arm and moving the fingers and thumb. Massaging the tissues can improve irritability over the scar.

Infection	Rare (Affects 1% or 1 in 100 people)	This is generally treated with oral antibiotics. Occasionally may need re-admission for Intravenous (I.V.) antibiotics or further surgery
Complex Regional Pain Syndrome	Very Rare (Affects 0.2% or 1 in 500 people)	This can be a very serious consequence with some permanent changes including stiffness in the hand and arm. CRPS can usually be avoided by staying motivated with elevation, movement and scar massage.
Nerve Injury	Very Rare	There may be a small patch of numbness next to the scar after this surgery.