

Department of  
**OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY**

## A Hand Therapy Guide: Trigger Finger



## Other Medical Treatment

Your doctor may:

- Prescribe anti-inflammatory medications
- Offer a corticosteroid injection to reduce the inflammation

## Surgical Treatment

The doctor may recommend surgery if there is little improvement from non-surgical treatment.

### After surgery, please remember to:

- Keep your wound clean and dry by changing your wound dressing as recommended
- Manage your scar as recommended by your doctor or nurse after your stitches are removed
- Manage your pain and swelling as recommended by your doctor or occupational therapist
- Perform hand exercises as recommended by your occupational therapist
- Continue to modify the way you perform your daily activities to minimise the chance of recurrence
- Put on your prescribed splint/brace as recommended

Clinic B1  
(Occupational Therapy & Speech Therapy Clinic)  
TTSH Medical Centre, Level B1  
Contact:  
6357 7000 (Central Hotline)

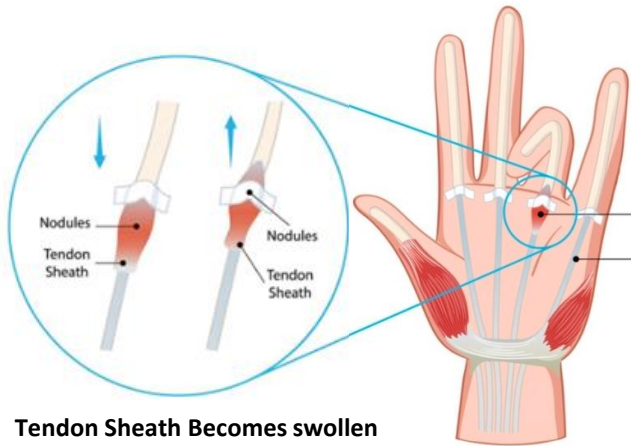


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# Understanding Trigger Finger

Trigger finger is a common hand condition where the finger or thumb locks or catches in a bent position.

As you bend your digit, a tendon slides through a tunnel (tendon sheath). Triggering happens when this tunnel becomes thickened and narrowed, or when the tendon is swollen and cannot slide through its tunnel smoothly. This may cause pain, triggering, or actual locking of digit as shown in Figure I.



Tendon Sheath Becomes swollen

Figure I.

Inflammation of the digit tendon

# Actions That May Cause This Condition

## Actions that may cause this condition



Repetitive or prolonged gripping

Repetitive finger movement such as:

- During self-care: holding of walking aids
- During housework: wringing of towel, mopping floor, grocery shopping
- During cooking: using a knife/scissors, pots, opening jars

# Signs & Symptoms

- Pain/ discomfort/ thickening/ swelling at the base of the affected digit
- Triggering or locking of the affected digit. May be worse in the morning

**Your active participation is key for therapy to be effective!**

# Hand Occupational Therapy

- **REST** and minimize movements or activities that increases pain
- **Modify the way you do your daily activities, for example:**

Squeeze cloth between two hands and drip dry



Carry load over elbow or shoulder



- Wear a prescribed splint as recommended



- Perform your exercises/heat treatment/ massage as recommended by your occupational therapist
- Learn self-management strategies to minimise the chance of recurrence