

# Stenosing Tenosynovitis (Trigger finger)

## Self-care Guide

### Introduction



Trigger finger is known as stenosing tenosynovitis. It occurs when inflammation narrows the space within the sheath that surrounds the tendon in the affected finger due to repeated finger flexors motion. Prolonged irritation of the tendon sheath can produce scarring, thickening and the formation of nodules in the tendon that impede the tendon's motion and locked the finger in a bent or straight position. Trigger finger can affect any finger, especially the thumb.

### Cause

People whose work or hobbies require prolong and repetitive gripping actions, carrying of heavy objects, typing, using computer mouse or phone are at higher risk of developing trigger finger. The condition is also more common in people with rheumatoid arthritis or metabolic disease such as diabetes.



### Sign and Symptom

Early signs and symptoms of trigger finger included finger stiffness or soreness particularly in the morning or after work, finger catching or locking in a bent position which might need another hand to straighten the affected finger.

Trigger finger can be classified into 4 grades according to the severity level

Grade I	Pain/ History of catching
Grade II	Demonstrate catching, but can actively extend the digit
Grade III	Demonstrate locking, requiring passive extension
Grade IV	Fixed flexion contracture

### Home care

#### *Acute stage (Active Inflammation)*

Resting pain, warm and swelling of the affected finger are common at the acute stage. Rest and avoid repetitive fingers movement, use of ice pad to cover the inflammation site (3 times per day, lasting 15 min each time) can help to relief the symptoms.



#### *Chronic stage:*

As the active inflammation subsided, home exercise program can be started according the therapist's instruction:

#### *1. Stretching exercise and massage*

Passively pull the finger into an extended position to stretch the affected finger flexor. Repeated 10 times each lasting for 10 sec. Deep friction massage at the nodule site can also be applied.



#### *2. Hot pad*

Immersed the hand into a warm water bath or covered with hot pad (Water temperature <45°C) for 15min in the morning and at night can help to improve the circulation and soften the tight muscle tendon.