

# Family & Friends ORTHOPEDICS

## Flexor Pollicis Longus Tendon Repair Therapy Instructions Jill McAngus, MD

### **3-5 days**

Therapy is started to focus on recovery of motion. In addition, a removable dorsal blocking splint is fashioned.

#### Splint:

- Fashion a short-arm dorsal blocking splint with the wrist in 20 degrees of flexion, the thumb CMC palmarly abducted and flexed under the index metacarpal, and the thumb MP in full extension.
- For Zone I FPL injuries, create a separate dorsal gutter IP blocking splint holding the IP in 30 degrees of flexion, to be worn with the above dorsal blocking splint.

#### Motion:

Therapy visits should be scheduled for 3-4 sessions per week. Home exercises should be performed 15-20 times per hour, every hour while awake.

Home exercise program.

1. Passive composite thumb flexion and active extension within splint.
2. Passive IP flexion and active extension within limits of the splint.
3. Gravity assisted wrist flexion and active extension within the limits of the splint.
4. Tendon gliding exercises for the index through small fingers.

During therapy visits perform above plus:

1. Place-and-hold thumb flexion with the wrist extended.

Avoid: Passive wrist and thumb extension.

#### Edema Control:

Coban, digit sleeves, ACE wrap, edema modalities per therapist.

### **3-5 weeks**

#### Splint:

- At 4 weeks, cut back the blocking splint to be hand-based only and allow wrist extension.

#### Motion:

- Continue home exercises as above.
- At week 4, initiate active thumb flexion with the wrist extended in hook, straight, and full-fist positions.
- Light prehensile activities (e.g. writing) can be started at 4 weeks during therapy. These can then be incorporated in to the home exercise program at 5 weeks.

### **6-8 weeks**

#### Splint:

- Discontinue splint use during the day at 6 weeks. Continue with use of the splint at night until 10 weeks.
- Initiate dynamic IP extension splinting if necessary.

Motion:

- Blocking exercises for IP flexion can be initiated.
- Lifting restriction up to a glass of water at 8 weeks.

Edema Control:

Per therapist.

**8-10+ weeks**

Splint:

- Discontinue use of splint at night at 10 weeks.

Motion:

- Transition to home exercise program at 8-10 weeks.
- Begin gentle strengthening at 8 weeks.
- 5 lbs lifting restriction at 10 weeks.
- 10-15lbs lifting restriction at 12 weeks.
- No restrictions at 14+ weeks.