



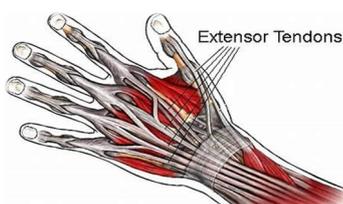
What is an extensor tendon, and how are they injured?

Extensor tendons, located on the back of the hand and fingers, allow you to straighten your fingers and thumb. These tendons are attached to muscles in the forearm. As the tendons travel into the fingers, they become flat and thin. In the fingers these tendons are joined by smaller tendons from the muscles in the hand. It is these small-muscle tendons that allow delicate finger motion and coordination.

Extensor tendons are just under the skin and lie directly on the bone over the back of the hands and fingers. Because of their location, they can be easily injured even by a minor cut. Jamming a finger may cause these thin tendons to rip away from their attachment to bone. After this type of injury, you may find it difficult straightening one or more joints. Treatment is necessary to return function to the tendon.

How are extensor tendon injuries treated?

Lacerations on the back of the hand that go through the extensor tendons may cause difficulty in straightening the finger and are usually treated by stitching the tendon ends together. Splinting for a tendon injury following surgery like this may include the wrist and part of the finger and is required until the tendon has healed. Dynamic splinting is sometimes used which allows for gentle early movement to reduce stiffness.



What is a Boutonnière deformity, & how is it treated?

Boutonnière deformity describes the bent-down or flexed position of the middle joint of the finger from a cut or tear of the extensor tendon at that level. Treatment involves splinting the middle joint in a straight position although sometimes stitches are necessary when the tendon has been cut. If this injury is not treated, or if the splint is not worn properly, the finger can quickly stiffen in a flexed position.

