

Self Help for De Quervain's Tenosynovitis

Information for patients

What is De Quervain's tenosynovitis?

De Quervain's tenosynovitis is the term used to describe inflammation of two tendons that sit at the base of your thumb/wrist.

Contributing factors

- Hormonal changes associated with pregnancy
- Overuse of wrist and hand
- An unusual increase or change in your activity, such as DIY and gardening
- Thumb injuries
- Inflammatory conditions

When to seek medical attention

- A new lump or bump around the base of thumb or wrist
- Bruising or redness in and around the joint or new multiple joint swellings
- Feeling unwell with a temperature associated with the onset of this problem
- Loss of feeling and power around the thumb

Symptoms

Symptoms can vary in intensity; they usually consist of pain and swelling at the base of the thumb or wrist. Thumb movements such as gripping/pinching may aggravate symptoms.

What to expect

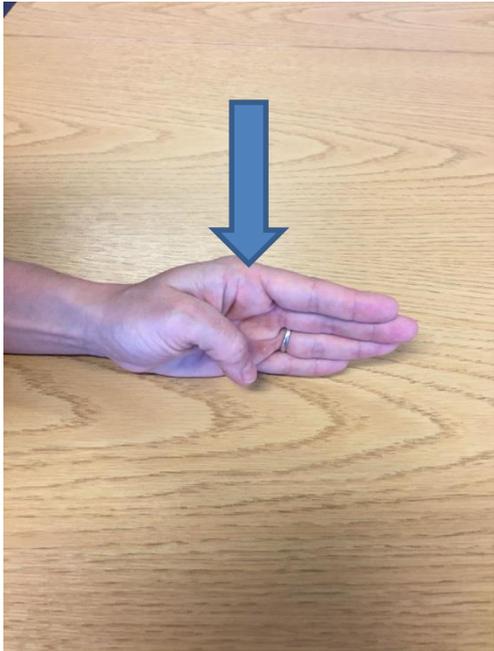
The majority of symptoms associated with De Quervain's tenosynovitis will settle with rest and the correct changes to activity. If symptoms fail to respond within six weeks, you may benefit from a corticosteroid injection. In extreme cases surgery may be required.

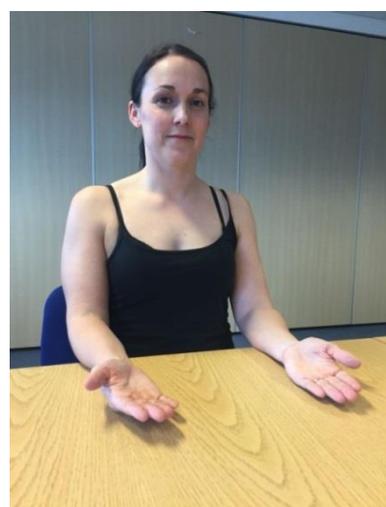
Management

- Avoid aggravating the symptoms by changing your activity
- Wear a Thumb Spica splint during activities that aggravate your pain. These should be available at your chemist
- Adequately control your pain. Speak to a local pharmacist if you are unsure which medication may help
- You could apply an ice pack or bag of frozen peas wrapped in a damp towel to the injury for 20 minutes every two to three hours. Be sure to check the ice does not burn your skin. Do not use if you have any circulatory problems or conditions which stop you sensing cold

- Work place assessments can be helpful to make changes to reduce stress on your wrist or thumb
- Occupational therapy assessment and input may be requested by your physiotherapist or GP if require

Exercises

Demonstration	Instructions
	<p>Sit with good posture. Place your forearm, supported, on a table with your hand off the edge. Gently allow your hand to move towards the floor.</p> <p>Keeping your thumb relaxed and next to your fingers. You might feel a gentle pulling sensation.</p> <p>Hold this position for five seconds and then return to the starting position.</p> <p>Repeat 10 times, two to three times a day as tolerated.</p>
	<p>Sit in good posture with your forearm resting on a table. Gently allow your thumb to cross your palm towards the base of your little finger.</p> <p>Move your thumb until you feel a gentle stretch. Hold this position for five seconds and then return to the resting position.</p> <p>Repeat 10 times, two to three times a day as tolerated.</p>



Sit with a good posture with your palms facing downwards on a table. Ensure your thumb is very relaxed as you slowly rotate your forearms over so that your palms face upwards.

It is important to maintain a relaxed thumb throughout the movement.

Repeat this action slowly 10 times, two to three times a day as tolerated.

Frequently asked questions

When can I return to sport?

You may return to sport when you can perform the range of movements and strength required for your sport.

What can I do if my symptoms do not settle?

If your symptoms have not settled after four to six weeks, you should consider referring yourself to your local physiotherapy department. Physiotherapy self-referral forms are available at your GP reception. Complete the form and return to the reception desk. You will either receive a telephone call or a letter for you to arrange an appointment with the physiotherapist.

This information is available in audio, Braille, large print and other languages. To request a copy, please ask a member of staff.

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