

GRIP

Hand, Wrist &
Reconstructive
Surgery

Trigger Finger or Trigger Thumb Release

Trigger finger / trigger thumb

Tendons that bend the fingers or thumb glide through a series of tunnels (pulleys). A trigger finger or trigger thumb occurs when swelling of the tendon causes it to hook on the edge of a pulley, resulting in clicking or triggering. Typically, the first pulley in the palm of the hand (the A1 pulley) is involved.

Trigger finger or trigger thumb is very common and can cause functional or painful symptoms. In some cases, more than one finger is involved.

Your operation

Trigger finger or trigger thumb release surgery involves release of the A1 pulley through an incision in the overlying skin. This creates immediate space for the tendon to glide freely. In some cases, swollen tissue around the tendon(s) also needs to be removed (tenosynovectomy).

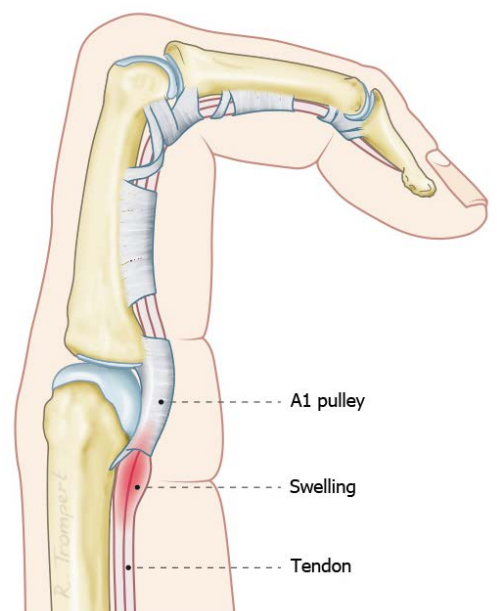
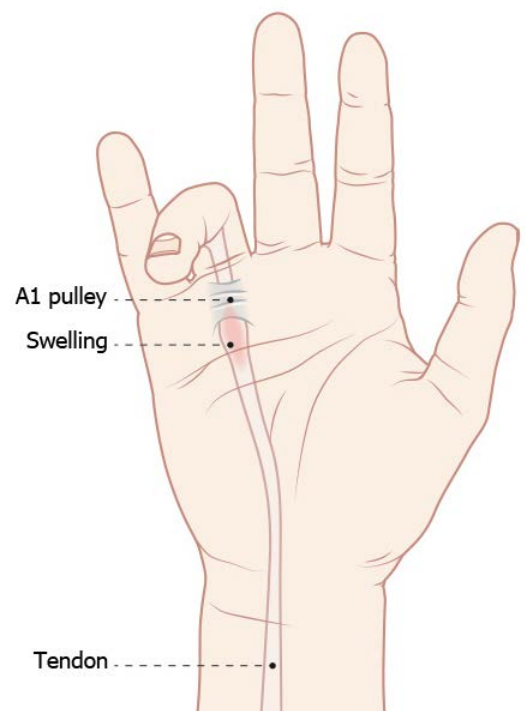
The procedure usually takes place as a day surgery procedure using sedation and a local anaesthetic. It takes approximately 20 minutes. The incision will be closed with skin sutures. A tape bandage (Hypafix) will cover the wound under a soft hand dressing.

After the operation

Day of surgery: some or all your fingers may feel numb or tingly for 6-36 hours due to the local anaesthetic. You can start to move and use your fingers and thumb for light duties before you leave the hospital.

Day 1-4 after surgery: keep the soft dressing clean and dry. On day 3 or 4 after the operation, you can take the soft dressing off your hand, but keep the tape bandage on your skin intact.

Day 4-14 after surgery: the tape bandage on your hand can get wet under the shower or when washing your hand. Just dab it dry with a towel afterwards. If it comes off, use a simple bandaid to protect the sutures. Use your hand lightly as tolerated and avoid heavy duties.



Two weeks after surgery: your progress will be reviewed by the doctor, hand therapist or practice nurse. Skin sutures will be removed during this visit. If needed, a new tape bandage will be placed for another 3-5 days.

Six weeks after surgery: if needed, another follow up appointment will take place to monitor your progress.

Recovery

Most patients notice immediate relief of triggering and recover within the first 2 weeks. It is not abnormal for the area around the scar to remain tender or swollen for 2 or sometimes 6 weeks after surgery. Moisturising and massage of this area is helpful. If needed, you will be referred to a hand therapist to assist you with your recovery.

Potential complications

Trigger finger or trigger thumb release surgery is routine, safe and complications rarely occur. These complications can include: wound healing problems, infection, bleeding, bruising, nerve injury, stiffness, ongoing tenderness or swelling around the scar or slower than expected recovery. Very rarely, triggering symptoms come back. This may require another procedure in the future.

Driving after surgery

General advice on driving after surgery:

- » there is no legislation that covers surgery and driving
- » you must be able to safely control your car well, even in an emergency situation
- » some insurers will not cover any damage or liability if you had "recent surgery", if you were wearing a splint or cast whilst driving, or were using (pain) medication that could affect your ability to drive
- » it is advisable to contact your insurer before you are planning to drive again after your surgery
- » check with your surgeon if driving may affect the outcome of your rehabilitation.

CONTACT

If you have any questions or have concerns after your surgery, please contact our rooms during office hours on **08 7127 0365**.

After hours, please contact Dr. Paul van Minnen by phone call or text message:

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Disclaimer: All information provided on this handout should be considered as general guidelines. Actual practice and (expected) outcomes may differ in your case.