



Mallet finger



What is it?



The extensor tendons to the fingers and thumb begin in the forearm and attach near the fingertip (terminal phalanx).

A direct blow or strain to the tendon may cause it to rupture thus resulting in finger deformity.

How is it diagnosed?



Mallet finger is diagnosed on the basis of the history described above, and by clinical examination. Special tests are not usually required, although an x-ray may be obtained if an associated fracture is suspected.

What is my approach to treatment?



In the vast majority of cases, continuous treatment with a Stack splint for a total of eight weeks will result in complete correction of the deformity.

If the splint needs to be removed to allow cleaning, which should be done as little as possible, the finger needs to be supported on a flat surface to prevent drooping and therefore stretching of the healing tendon.

What is the recovery period?

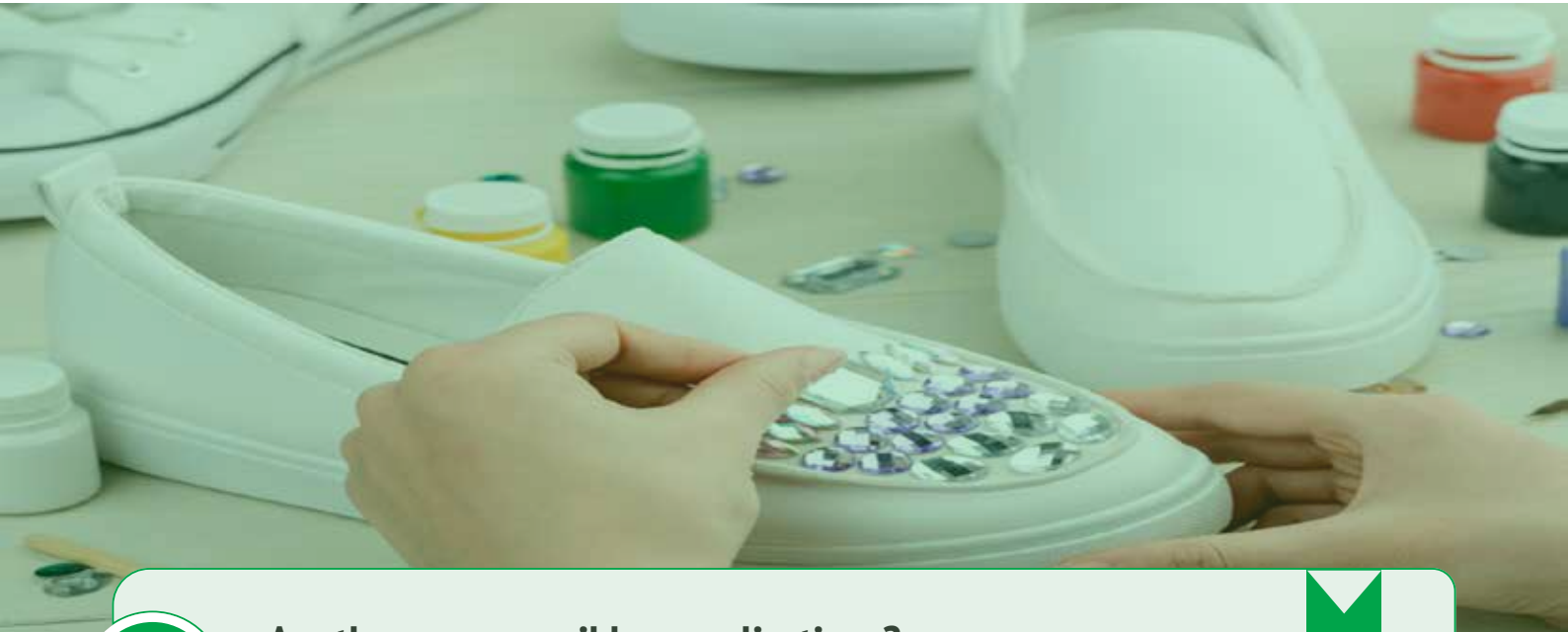


In some individuals, treatment for up to six weeks is required.

It's usually safe to return to work or driving immediately with the Stack splint in place. If the above treatment fails, or under special circumstances, the torn tendon can be repaired surgically.

The repair needs to be protected, with a wire placed across the joint for a minimum of six weeks.





Are there any possible complications?

Over 95% of patients are satisfied with the end result although ultimately this depends on complying with the regimen as outlined above.

Repeat trauma can result in recurrence of the deformity.



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