

# Therapy led care for a volar plate injury to your finger

Hands, Burns & Plastics Therapy

Information for Patients

Last reviewed: August 2024

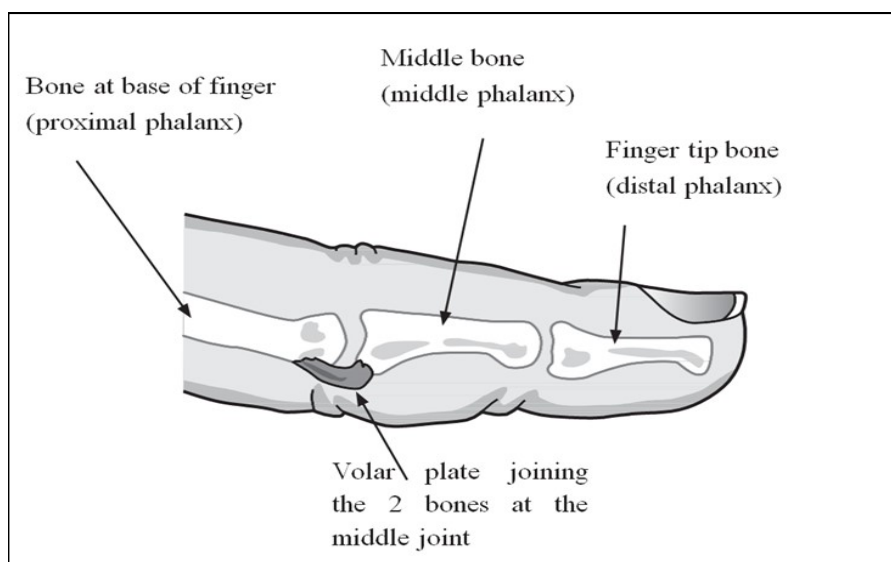
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## What is a volar plate?

Ligaments are tough bands of tissue that connect bones together. The volar plate is a very thick ligament. It is found on the underside of the middle joint of your finger (on the palm side of your finger joint). Its job is to support the middle joint and hold the 2 bones together in the correct position, which helps to stop the joint from getting injured by over straightening it.

### Side view of finger:



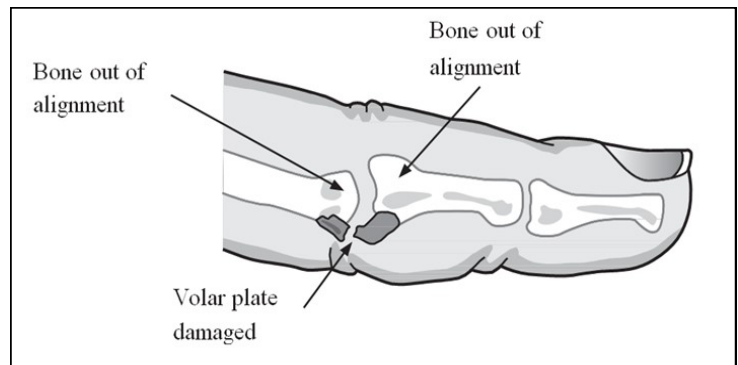
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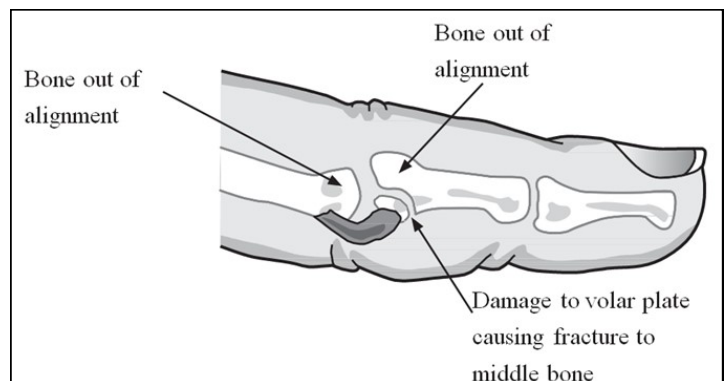
## What happens when the volar plate is injured?

Injury to the volar plate happens when a traumatic force pushes the joint's 2 surfaces out of the correct position. When the joint is pushed into the wrong position it can cause the volar plate to give way. Damage to the volar plate may, or may not, involve a fracture of the bone. If you have damaged the volar plate, your finger will be painful and swollen around the middle joint. If the joint has completely dislocated it will appear deformed.

### Damaged volar plate:



### Damaged volar plate with fracture:



## What is the treatment?

You will need to wear a splint to protect the joint. This to make sure the volar plate does not over-straighten and stretch, allowing it to heal. As the joints of the finger can get stiff very quickly, you will need to do certain exercises whilst the healing is taking place. Your therapist will then guide you on how to regain the normal use of your hand. It will take 12 weeks for the volar plate to fully heal.

## Your splint

Your splint will protect your finger by stopping it from fully straightening. This is to stop the volar plate from being stretched. It will also protect it from being accidentally knocked out of position again whilst it is healing.

Your finger is likely to be in the splint for 3 weeks, but in some cases it may need to be kept on longer. Your therapist will tell you how long to wear it for. You will need to wear the splint at all times.



## Exercises

Whilst in the splint your therapist will show you some exercises you need to do, which will bend all 3 joints of the finger. You will need to do these regularly throughout the day, to stop your joints from becoming stiff.

### Exercise 1:

Remove the top strap of the splint.

Using your other hand, bend all 3 finger joints into your palm (into a fist).

Let go and straighten up the finger back to the splint.

Repeat this \_\_\_\_\_ times, \_\_\_\_\_ times per day.



### Exercise 2:

Remove the top strap of the splint.

With your other hand hold your finger just below the crease of the top joint – this will stop the middle joint from moving.

Then bend the top joint of your finger as far as you can and then straighten it back up to the splint.

Repeat this \_\_\_\_\_ times, \_\_\_\_\_ times per day.



### Exercise 3:

Remove the top strap of the splint.

With your other hand hold your finger just below the crease of the middle joint – this will stop the bottom joint from moving.

Then bend the middle joint of your finger as far as you can and then straighten it back up to the splint.

Repeat this \_\_\_\_\_ times, \_\_\_\_\_ times per day.



### Exercise 4:

Remove the top strap of the splint.

Bend all 3 joints of your finger into your palm (into a fist).

Straighten back up to the splint.

Repeat this \_\_\_\_\_ times, \_\_\_\_\_ times per day.





## General advice

### Managing swelling:

You may have some swelling in your finger after injury and this is quite normal.

To reduce this it is important to raise your hand above your heart level. This can be done whilst sitting or lying, by resting your hand across your chest/ shoulder or by using pillows. Do not walk around with your hand hanging down at your side for a long time, in the first 3 weeks.

Doing your exercises will also help reduce swelling.

After injury, the middle joint of a finger can stay swollen for some time. The joint will often look bigger due to the scar tissue which builds up as it heals. The joint should gradually get smaller over time, and in some cases may return to its original size.

### Activity:

Whilst you are in the splint you should only use your hand for light daily activities.

You will need to keep your hand dry whilst wearing the splint.

We advice not to drive a car whilst wearing your splint.

Specific advice will be given for your job role and what is safe to do, by your therapist, as needed.

## Contact details

Name of Occupational Therapist / Physiotherapist: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_

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