

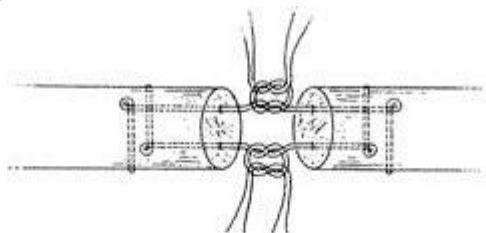
## Post-operative recovery

In significant hand injuries, operations may sometimes be extensive with considerable therapy and aftercare required; often further operations are required to treat the injury. Following the majority of hand injuries, and unless advised otherwise it is best that the hand is elevated in a sling during the day and pillows during the night to reduce swelling. This reduces pain and will decrease stiffness and ultimately provide an improved result. Despite good medical treatment, hand therapy and dedication from yourself, particularly in more severe injuries, the degree of recovery can be unpredictable.

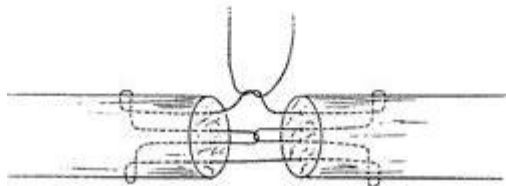
Follow up appointments and hand therapy are often required.

Best wishes for a good recovery.

*Paul*



**tendon repair**



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## PAUL JARRETT ORTHOPAEDIC SURGEON

**Hand  
Upper Limb  
Orthopaedic Trauma**

## Your Guide to Hand Injuries



**[pauljarrett.info](http://pauljarrett.info)**

# GUIDE TO HAND INJURIES

## Introduction

The hand is a delicate and finely crafted piece of equipment designed to perform many extremely important functions within our life. There are many accidents or injuries that can injure the hand causing reduced hand function and pain. It is important that as a patient not only the best form of medical care is undertaken but also that following care by the patient and therapists is carried out effectively.

Following a hand injury many structures within the hand may be injured. These structures include the skin, ligaments, tendons, bones, nerves and blood vessels. It may be difficult to assess which if any of these structures are injured and what the significance of these injuries are. It is important that should the injury be more than small or if in doubt, that an appropriate qualified medical practitioner assesses your injury and directs treatment where required.



fracture on arthroscopy

## Structures that can be injured

**Skin** – some small skin injuries may heal with no or minimal treatment. More major skin injuries may require suturing or more major reconstructive procedures including the use of skin grafts or flaps. Wounds often require to be washed out to reduce the risk of infection

**Ligaments** – some minor ligament injuries require no treatment and will recover spontaneously. Others may require hand therapy to regain motion or splintage to allow healing of the ligament injury. Some ligaments injuries require surgical repair or reconstruction.

**Tendons** – the majority of tendon injuries will require surgical repair, careful splintage and hand therapy to reach maximum recovery following the injury. Should careful care not be undertaken then stiffness, tendon rupture or lack of function may be the end result.

**Bones** – hand fractures can more often be treated with taping, splintage or plaster casts. This may require expert application of these techniques and monitoring of progress. Some hand fractures will require operative treatment. It is important that hand fractures are assessed and treated by an appropriate qualified medical practitioner and therapists.

**Nerves** – nerves in the hand are more often injured after wounds in the hand occur. Should nerve injury be suspected or possible then wounds require surgical exploration and the nerves repaired. Nerves once repaired do not function immediately and will take months to years to regain their maximal recovery. In addition, injured nerves never fully recover with amount of recovery dependant upon factors including the type of injury and age of the patient.

**Blood vessels** – blood vessels may be injured in the hand. This will cause bleeding and sometimes pressure effects in the hand. Significant blood vessel injury often requires surgical exploration and repair. The repair of blood vessels can clot off and therefore some patients will require to be monitored in hospital for some days and may require further surgery in the event of problems.

## Treatment options

The treatment of hand injuries must be individualized to each patient and each injury. X-rays and sometimes other investigations are sometimes required prior commencing your treatment. Treatment may not be require or may consist of a splint, or plaster casts or an operation(s). The full extent of the injury will often not be clear until the time of surgery. I will advise you of the options available to you and the relative advantages and disadvantages (including major risks) of each treatment to help you decide upon the correct approach for your own hand.

You will often require medications following your injury for pain relief and sometimes antibiotics.