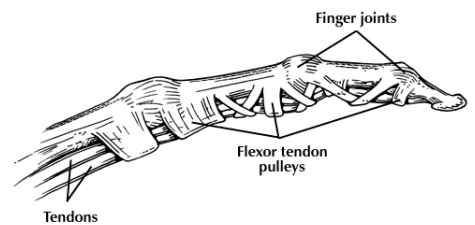




### What happens when a flexor tendon is injured?

The flexor tendons allow you to bend or flex your fingers to form a fist. They are cord-like structures attached to muscles in your forearm. In the finger, flexor tendons pass through fibrous tunnels called pulleys. When a tendon is cut the two ends separate, like cutting a rubber band, and you lose your ability to bend your finger. In partial injuries to the tendon, you may still be able to bend your finger, but it is painful. There may also be injuries to the nerve and blood vessels, which lie close by. As the two cut ends are separated, it is unlikely to heal without surgery to re-join the ends. Timing of surgery is important, and you should consult your doctor.



#### How are they diagnosed?

Usually no further investigations are needed if you are unable to bend your finger after a cut. Occasionally an X-ray or ultrasound are needed.

#### How are they repaired?

Tendons are repaired by suturing the two ends together. As the tendon ends are separated, your surgeon will usually need to clean your wound then extend the cut in both directions to allow the repair. After surgery, the injured hand is protected with a half plaster that usually includes all fingers and extends to your forearm to protect the repair. This must not be removed until you see your surgeon.

#### What happens after surgery?

Tendon healing happens slowly over about 12 weeks. Controlled and supervised rehabilitation under the direction of your surgeon and hand therapist is necessary to minimise the risk of the repaired tendon rupturing, prevent the scarring of the tendon to nearby tissues, regain your finger joint flexibility, reduce swelling, and soften your scar during the healing period. Surgery to release scar tissue around the tendon is occasionally needed.