

MIKE FOSTER
Hand Wrist and Elbow Surgeon
Mallet Injury

Problem

- The fingertip sits in a bent position.

Cause

- The extensor tendon has avulsed off the insertion into the distal bone.

Diagnosis

- Usually there has been a direct blow to the end of the finger, causing a sudden flexion deformity which avulses off the extensor tendon.
- Check x-rays are used to demonstrate any degree of bony injury and whether there is any subluxation of the joint.

Treatment

- Most mallet injuries can be treated non operatively with referral through to a hand therapist for formation of a custom splint, that holds the finger in extension for six to eight weeks.
- Injuries with significant bony fragments or subluxation should be considered for operative treatment acutely.

Potential Complications

- Small degree of lag at the end joint.
- Surgery runs risks of infection and stiffness.

Post Op Care

- The patient will be discharged in a satisfactory splint.
- Referral through to hand therapist for formation of a custom made splint that they remain in until the repair has healed. This normally takes between six to eight weeks.
- Gradually increasing range of movement once the repair has fully healed.