

Interphalangeal Joint Sprain

An interphalangeal joint sprain can occur if you sustain a hit or trauma to the hand, or you get your finger caught somehow during sport or a fall. A sprain happens when the collateral ligaments around the finger joint are sprained, or torn. If the ligament is torn, you might sublux or even dislocate the finger.

The first thing to check is if your finger is in the correct position. If it is, then the chances are you have not dislocated the finger. You may have subluxed (partial dislocation) the finger and it has come back into the correct position. You will be aware of a lot of pain around your finger, and soon afterwards it will swell and be very stiff. You will notice you are unable to properly bend your finger.

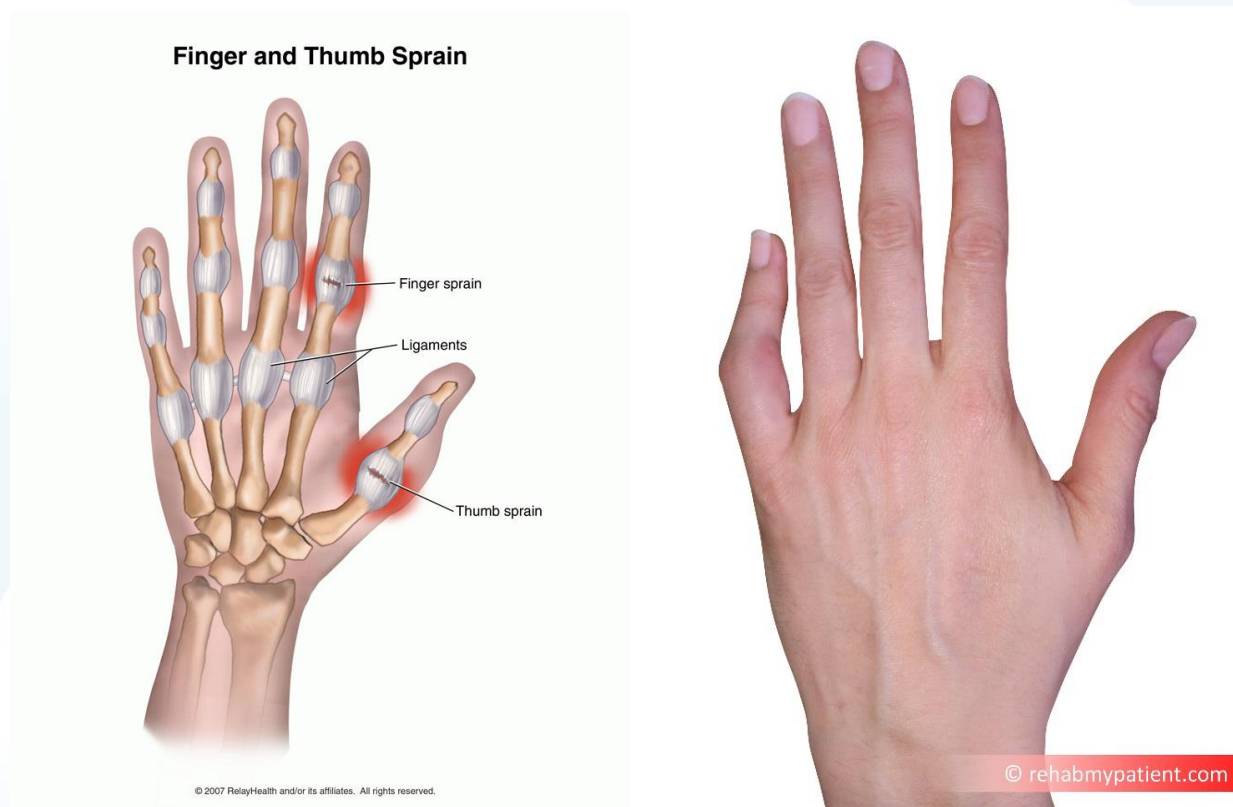
Most people simply leave them to get better, but it can take several months for healing to occur and you may be left with a permanent lump around the side of your finger where the ligament was torn.

Most injuries like this happen in sport, usually contact sports such as rugby and hockey. But they can also happen in combat sports or during a fight or grapple.

Interphalangeal Joint Sprain Anatomy

The anatomy within the hand is complex with many joints, ligaments, bones and tendons. Its integrity is imperative for individuals to be able to go through life on a regular basis and engage in normal activities. Hands can be affected by any number of disorders, but often from a traumatic injury.

Within the hand, there are 27 bones. Eight bones are within the carpals of your wrist. The palm of the hand contains five bones known as the metacarpals. The 14 bones within the fingers are known as the phalanges.



How to Treat an Interphalangeal Joint Sprain:

1. Ice

Apply ice to the affected area for 5-10 minutes at a time three to five times per day. Make sure to use a towel to wrap the ice to avoid getting an ice burn on the affected area.

2. Splint or Cast

By splinting or casting the affected hand, you can minimize movement and allow the bones the time they need to heal properly. If you keep moving your hand and joint, the injury site won't be able to heal. Immobilizing splints work great for sprains when you are performing any risky activities.



3. Buddy Taping

To aid in the healing process, buddy taping the injured finger to a healthy adjacent finger is one way to treat the finger. This will immobilize the finger, and can be used in the short term. Discuss this with your therapist.

4. Physical Therapy

After a sprain, you need to participate in physical therapy exercises to prevent stiffness from setting into the afflicted joint. Electrotherapy and mobilization techniques can be beneficial.

5. Realignment of the Bones

In cases of joint dislocations, you will need to get them re-set into position quickly. Most of the time, this will need to be done in an emergency room setting, urgent care facility or somewhere with a qualified medical professional. A follow-up examination with a surgeon is imperative after realigning the bones.

Tips:

- Athletes who participate in combat sports and martial arts such as karate, grappling or judo are more likely to suffer these injuries.
- If you are prone to falling, try to refrain from putting your hand out in front of you. People who fall are at a higher risk.
- Use ice ASAP to reduce pain and swelling.
- When your finger settles, bend it to improve the mobility to the finger.