

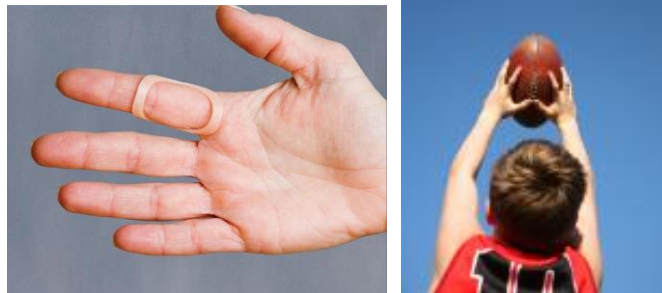


## **Sports Prevention and Injury Management: Finger Injuries**

*By Chelsea Low, Physiotherapist, Physioworks Health Group.*

Finger injuries are extremely common in ball sport activities, such as football, netball and basketball.

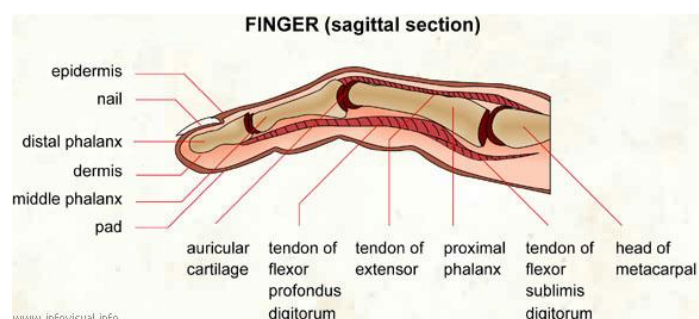
Most finger injuries may only be mild, however they can range from a mild joint sprain to a dislocation/fracture. Therefore, in more serious cases, treatment can consist of immobilization, splinting and in some cases surgery.



So depending on the injury the amount of missed games and time off sport can range from playing on to a potentially season ending finger injury. Therefore early diagnosis and treatment by a health professional, such as a physiotherapist, is extremely important so that long term deformities and functional impairment can be avoided.

A thorough history and clear mechanism are very important in hand and finger injuries. This will make a big difference in providing the player with a correct diagnosis.

Other important things to note are amount of pain, degree of swelling, bruising and loss of movement in the finger. If you feel that any of these things are more severe than a simple sprain of the finger you must refer them to a health professional for further investigation.



One of the most common injuries in this area is a **jarred/sprained finger**.

This occurs when the end of the finger comes into direct contact with the ball or another player and the bones of the finger are forced together. This injury will cause pain and swelling straight away and should be managed under the [RICE](#) principle. Often the player can continue to play but will require buddy taping (*where you tape two fingers together*).

Many common finger injuries can involve **finger fractures**. There are many different bones in the hands and fingers that can be broken. Fractures can be:

- closed, where the skin is not pierced,
- open when the bone has come through the skin
- an avulsion fracture where the tendon pulls from the bony attachment site and removes part of the bone.

With any suspected fracture the digit should be immobilised and sent for an X-ray. If it is an open fracture you must call an ambulance secondary due to the high risk of infection.

Other finger injuries involve **dislocations and ligament sprains**. These will require further treatment from a qualified health professional.

**About the author:** [Chelsea Low](#) is a physiotherapist consulting at [Physioworks Health Group Cranbourne and Pakenham](#) clinics. Chelsea has a long term interest in the health, well-being and fitness of children, including providing her services to local community junior sporting clubs, and is currently undertaking further education in Paediatric Physiotherapy.

**About Physioworks Health Group:** [Physioworks Health Group](#) has a team of dedicated physiotherapists and health professionals providing a range of specialist health services at clinics in Cranbourne, Pakenham and Camberwell. Physioworks is the Medical and Health Care partner of the EDFL. Physioworks Director David Francis is the Head Physiotherapist to the Collingwood Football Club. [www.physioworkshealthgroup.com.au](http://www.physioworkshealthgroup.com.au)