

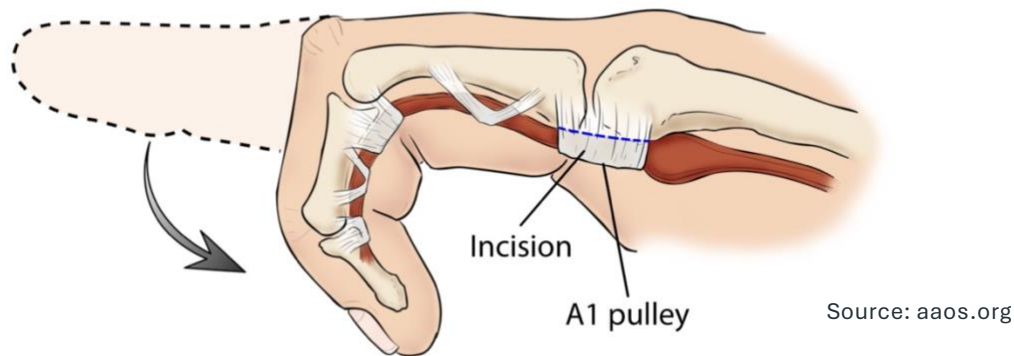
Trigger Finger Release Surgery: What You Need to Know

Trigger finger (or stenosing tenosynovitis) occurs when a tendon in the finger or thumb becomes inflamed and catches or locks as it moves through its protective sheath. This can cause pain, stiffness, or a clicking sensation, and in severe cases, the finger may get stuck in a bent position. When non-surgical treatments like rest, splinting, or steroid injections don't resolve the issue, trigger finger release surgery may be recommended. This procedure frees the tendon to glide smoothly again. Below, we explain the surgery, recovery, potential complications, and expected outcomes to help you feel prepared.

Description of the Surgery

Trigger finger release is a straightforward procedure performed through a small incision in the hand. Here's how it works:

- The surgeon numbs the area with local anesthesia, so you won't feel pain during the surgery. Sedation may be offered if you feel anxious, but general anesthesia is rarely needed.
- A small incision (about ½ inch) is made in the palm near the base of the affected finger or thumb.
- The surgeon carefully locates the A1 pulley—a tight band of tissue causing the tendon to catch—and cuts it to release the constriction. This allows the tendon to move freely without locking or snapping.
- The incision is closed with a couple stitches, and a bandage is applied.
- The procedure typically takes 10 to 15 minutes and is done as an outpatient surgery, meaning you can go home the same day.



What to Expect During Recovery

Recovery from trigger finger release is usually quick, though it varies based on your healing process and the extent of tendon inflammation. Here's a general timeline:

- **Immediately After Surgery:**
Your hand will be bandaged for 48 hours, and you may feel mild soreness or swelling. Pain is typically minimal and can be managed with over-the-counter medications like ibuprofen or Tylenol, however prescribed pain medications may be provided.
- **First Few Days:**
Keep your hand elevated to reduce swelling, and avoid gripping or heavy use of the affected finger. You'll be encouraged to gently move the finger from a full fist to complete extension to minimize the risk of stiffness.

- **First 1-2 Weeks:**
Stitches are usually removed within 10-14 days. You can gradually resume light activities, like typing or writing, as comfort allows. The incision site may feel tender but should improve daily.
- **Weeks 3-4:**
Most patients regain full use of their finger, with improved flexibility and strength. Soreness near the incision is expected with heavy use and gripping, although this will typically resolve in 2-3 months.
- **Full Recovery:**
Complete healing, including resolution of any residual stiffness or soreness, typically occurs within 6-12 weeks after surgery.

Follow your surgeon's advice on activity restrictions and wound care to ensure a smooth recovery.

Potential Complications

Trigger finger release is a low-risk procedure, but as with any surgery, complications can occur. These are uncommon and usually treatable:

- **Infection:** Signs include redness, swelling, or drainage at the incision site, which can be addressed with antibiotics.
- **Nerve or Tendon Injury:** Rarely, nearby nerves or tendons may be irritated, potentially causing numbness or weakness. This is typically temporary. Permanent injury is extremely rare.
- **Scar Sensitivity:** The incision site may feel tender or irritated for a few weeks or months, though this usually fades with time.
- **Stiffness:** Some patients experience lingering stiffness, which can often be improved with exercises or therapy.
- **Recurrence:** If other pulleys or the tendons become inflamed, symptoms could return, though this is rare after a successful release.

Contact your doctor if you notice severe pain, signs of infection, or difficulty moving the finger after surgery.

Expected Outcomes

Trigger finger release is highly effective, with most patients experiencing lasting relief. Here's what you can expect:

- **Symptom Relief:** The catching, locking, or clicking sensation typically resolves immediately or within days. Pain and tenderness should also improve quickly.
- **Restored Function:** You'll regain smooth finger motion, making it easier to grip, hold objects, and perform daily tasks without discomfort.
- **Long-Term Success:** Over 90% of patients enjoy permanent relief from trigger finger symptoms after surgery. Recurrence is uncommon unless new factors, like repetitive strain or arthritis, affect the hand.

The success of the surgery depends on factors like how long the condition was present and your commitment to following post-operative care instructions.

Final Notes

Trigger finger release is a safe and reliable way to restore comfort and function to your hand. If you have questions about the procedure or your recovery, feel free to reach out to your surgeon. We're here to support you every step of the way!