



BRITISH ASSOCIATION  
OF HAND THERAPISTS

## **Standards of hand therapy practice in the rehabilitation of non-surgically managed collateral ligament injuries of the fingers**

**Endorsed by:**  
British Association of Hand Therapists

Devised by the ligament Standards Working Group, 2023  
Further information is available from: <https://www.hand-therapy.co.uk>

## **Definition:**

These standards relate to the management of all **non-surgically managed** closed collateral ligament injuries of the fingers in adults.

## **Standards**

1. Following a decision for non-operative management, patients should be referred to a Hand Therapist experienced in the management of ligament injuries for assessment and formulation of a treatment plan.
2. The first appointment should be face-face within 7 days of referral and include a documented assessment of joint integrity.
3. The patient's level of pain, values, occupation and hand function requirements should be discussed and considered in a joint decision-making process. Expectation regarding joint appearance / aesthetics should be discussed and managed.
4. The rehabilitation regimen should include buddy taping to the relevant adjacent finger for support, an orthosis if clinically indicated and an exercise regime to maintain joint range of movement.
5. Virtual appointments or patient initiated follow ups can be utilised at clinicians' discretion and based on clinical need.
6. The rehabilitation regimen should be supported by both written and verbal information.
7. Measurements should be taken of total active motion using a standardised technique and compared to the contralateral hand at the commencement of mobilisation and at discharge.
8. Grip and pinch strengths should be assessed once joint integrity and stability has been confirmed, and no earlier than week eight post injury, using a standardised technique and compared with the contralateral hand and established normal values.
9. A recognised patient reported outcome measure should be used during therapy and on discharge in addition to range of movement, grip & pinch strength and patient satisfaction.
10. In the absence of a satisfactory outcome, the patient should be referred to a hand surgeon to discuss other treatment options.

**Implementation of these standards should be used to guide therapists in the clinical setting. It is recognised that care may be influenced by factors including access to hand therapy, nature of injury, patient characteristics and**

**surgical management. Professional judgment, based on clinical reasoning, will strongly influence the management and outcome following closed collateral ligament injury of the fingers.**

### **Evidence and Supporting Literature;**

Roh et al., (2018) Factors influencing functional outcomes PIPJ collateral ligament with buddy strapping and exercises

### **Membership of the Ligament Standards Working Group**

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