

# Evaluation of Written and Video Education Tools Following Mallet Finger Injury

Christine B. Novak, PT, PhD, Lonita Mak, OT Reg (ON), CHT, Mary Chang, PT, CHT

Toronto Western Hospital Hand Program, University Health Network, Division of Plastic & Reconstructive, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario

## Purpose

Successful non-operative treatment of mallet finger injuries depends on compliance to prolonged immobilization and clear, understandable education materials.

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the use of written and online video instructions following mallet finger injury.

## Methods

- Inclusion criteria: Adults with an acute mallet finger injury referred to Hand Therapy.
- Standard non-operative treatment with orthotic immobilization and verbal instructions regarding the injury and orthosis care. Patients were provided with an education pamphlet and a link to an online video.
- A questionnaire regarding the education materials was administered at the follow up appointment.
- Prospective study; Research Ethics Board approved

**What is mallet finger?**  
Mallet finger happens when a straight finger is bent suddenly against a hard surface. The tendon on the back of your finger tears, making it difficult to straighten the tip of your finger.



**Splinting**

- To heal in a proper position, our tendon needs to be protected.
- The tip of your finger must be positioned straight all the time, day and night. This is done with a splint.
- Your splint may look like one of these pictures below.



**Things to watch out for**

Your splint has been made especially for you and should be comfortable. Contact your therapist if any of the following happens:

- Your splint feels tight or uncomfortable
- A red irritated area or sore develops on your skin
- Your skin is white or wet when you remove the splint
- You have increased pain, swelling, or numbness

**How to take care of your finger**

- Wear the splint **all the time**, day and night
- Move the middle joint of that finger often
- Wash your finger and splint once a day
- When you remove your splint you **must support the tip** of your finger with your other hand, or on a table
- When you wash your finger at a sink, you **must keep the tip straight** at all times with your other hand



**How to take care of your splint**

- Wash the splint in cold water every day
- Do not place your splint near any heat sources, such as a stove or radiator. Your splint will change its shape if it is heated

**Contact Us**

If you have any problems or questions about your splint or treatment please call:

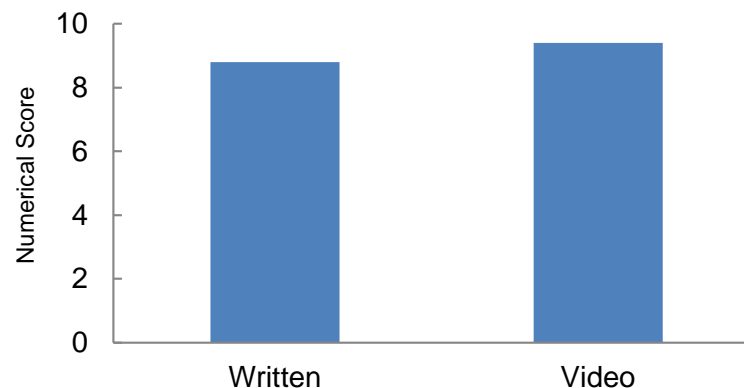
416-603-5146  
Splint A: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bb\\_9Fa2edw0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bb_9Fa2edw0)  
Splint B: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7aH0THx-8o>

## Results

- Subjects: 61 patients (41 men, 20 women) Mean age 42 ± 4 years
- Injuries: middle (n = 21) ring (n = 22) fingers were most commonly injured
- All patients were fluent in English and 27 spoke another language.
- Most patients were working (n = 48) and had university/college education (n = 51).
- Written instructions (n = 57) were used by more patients than the videos (n = 30; most commonly viewed on a computer, n = 25).
- Comparing patients who viewed the video to those that did not, there were no differences (p > .05) in demographics (sex, age, education, work status, second language).
- Most patients preferred having both written and video instructions (n = 30) and were found to be easy to understand and convenient

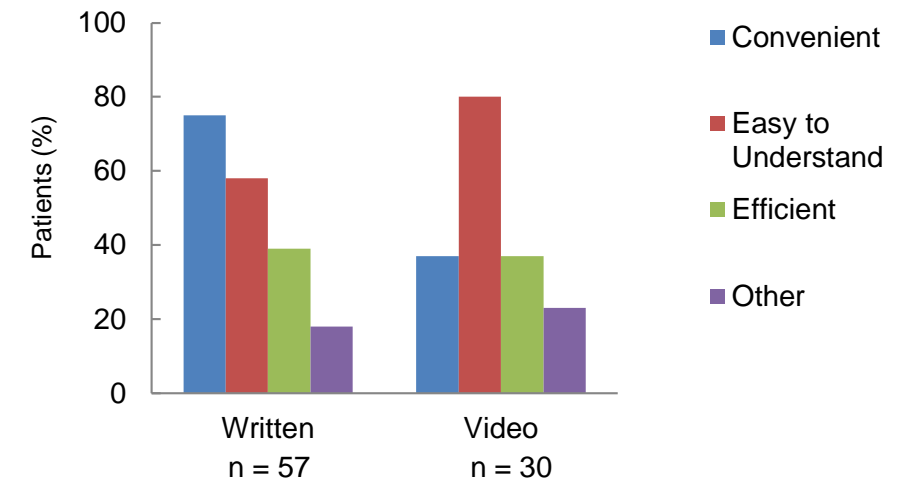
## Comparison of Helpful Scores for Written vs. Video Instructions

Both written and video instructions were reported as helpful; the mean helpful score for video instruction was statistically significantly (p = 0.003) higher than the written instructions.



## Assessment of Using Written vs Video Instructions

Most patients preferred having both written and video instructions (n = 30).



## Conclusion

In patients with acute mallet finger injuries, our results indicated that written and video instructions were utilized and were reported as helpful.

This study provides evidence of the usefulness of online videos as an educational aid.

## Disclosures

No financial disclosures

