



Digit Widget™ Therapy protocol

Have the patient wear the Digit Widget as close to full time as possible allowing for time off to bathe, hand washing etc. It is also recommended that the patient remove the band 4-5 times per day for ~10 minutes to perform unresisted flexion exercises.

Start the patient with the lightest weight bands. If they show an increase in extension and do not have excessive pain, swelling or stiffness in the finger then they can either stay at the light band or go up to the medium and heavy bands. The gain in extension from week to week varies with the cause of the contracture, the length of time it has been present and most importantly, the number of prior surgeries the finger may have had. Look for an extension gain of 10-20° per week without a significant decrease in the amount of flexion.

Some patients do not have to use anything stronger than the light band, and other patients wear 2-3 heavy bands. It is totally dependent on the patient's response to the torque. It may take up to 8 weeks to reverse a 90° flexion contracture. Some may be quicker, some may take longer. Graphing the patient's ROM during treatment makes it easier to see a plateau and to adjust their treatment accordingly.

The device should not be removed entirely (as long as the finger is benign) until the patient has gone through a trial period without the bands on to see how the finger responds. This is especially important if the underlying cause of the contracture is still not fully defined. In any case, it may be best to retain the device on the finger for 1-2 weeks after full extension is achieved.

If prolonged extension splinting after contracture reversal has been achieved is part of the overall therapy plan, try adding several (4-5) of the heavy bands to the elastic band posts to act as a PIP flexion block. The patient should perform DIP flexion exercises frequently using this method to help restore balance to the extensor mechanism. Be aware, though, when the connector assembly is detached from the cuff, the PIP joint will be free to flex. If it is off for a short time (i.e., to shower) this shouldn't be a problem.

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other information and case studies may be viewed at our website:
www.handbiolab.com