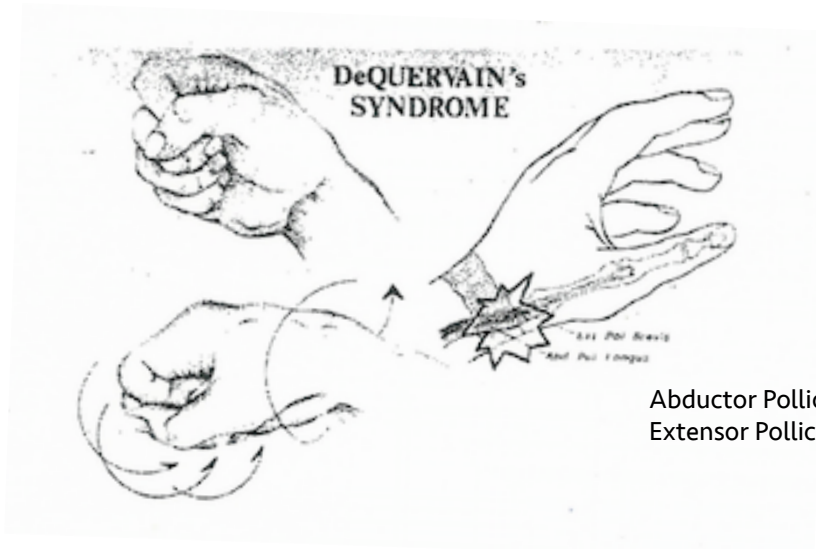


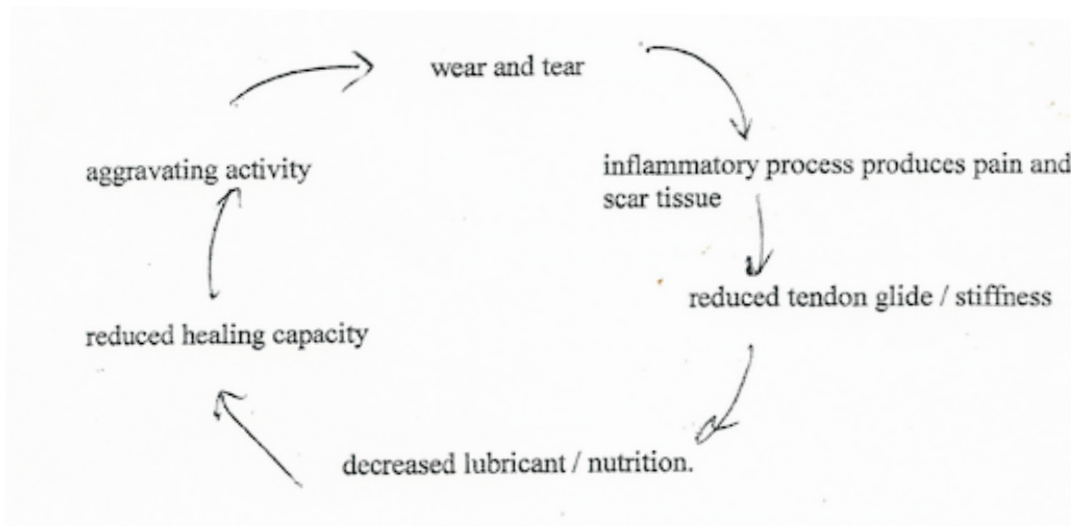
De Quervain's Tendinopathy Information



De Quervain's tendinopathy can be described as degeneration and inflammation of the tendons that straighten and pull back the thumb. Common symptoms include pain and swelling in the wrist and thumb, sometimes causing a restriction of movement.

De Quervain's is usually caused by repetitive &/or excessive strain of the thumb and wrist.

The involved tendons lie inside a fluid-filled tube, which provides a lubricated, "frictionless" world for the tendons to slide in. The fluid is also an important source of nutrition to maintain a healthy tendon. Anything that upsets this lubrication / nutrition / gliding system set up a potential cycle for progressive degeneration with increasing pain and stiffness.



Treatment

Initial focus is to prevent further wear & tear by avoiding aggravating activities, reduce inflammation and restore some pain-free gliding of the tendons.

Strategies for daily living include simplifying your environment and generally using common sense to avoid aggravating your condition as much as possible. The following information is intended to help you work out how to help yourself. The ideas have been suggested by other patients and research. They are offered as opinions, and you can decide what best suits your needs.

The basic idea is to get a balance between rest, exercise and use. This should restore tendon gliding, improve nutrition and decrease inflammation, thereby reversing the degeneration cycle and start the healing process. At the same time, you should notice the pain and stiffness starts to settle.

Helpful hints for everyday tasks:

Household chores

- Set priorities for tasks that need to be done urgently, done soon, and ones that can wait
- Delegate jobs around the house where possible, share the load
- Avoid using your thumb to grasp objects in a manner that bends the wrist sideways, avoid lifting saucepans by the handle
- Avoid carrying objects that require a firm grip eg suitcase, bucket, full baby bath
- Use build-up grips on regularly used items eg pens, cutlery, toothbrush, razors
- Break tasks into small components to allow muscles and tendons time to rest. Do small frequent loads of washing during the day
- Take short cuts when possible eg use frozen pre-cuts vegetables, use paper plates
- Use a jar opener when opening lids off jars
- Have washers replaced on commonly used taps to avoid forceful grasp on taps
- When carrying shopping bags into the house, put them on benches or tables to avoid picking them up off the floor, or better still have your groceries delivered



Pillow Support

Exercises

As mentioned earlier, the tendons lie in a tube-like compartment that are fluid filled and designed to allow “frictionless” gliding. Degeneration and inflammation plug the system, restricting normal tendon gliding. The purpose of the exercises is to restore normal gliding and stretch which facilitates healing.

Do not push into pain. Do not test out your hand

Three to five times a day go through gentle movements of the wrist and thumb

The Next Step

Once you have shown some improvement with swelling and pain-free movement (this may take a few weeks):

- Gradually wean splint during the day, continue for ‘problem’ tasks
- Continue to avoid prolonged pinch, forceful thumb use and repetitive wrist movement
- Start gentle exercises to strengthen the thumb

Keep in contact with your therapist and call if you have any concerns

References: NMAA, Survival Plan Booklet, The Illustrated Hand
Rehabilitation of the Hand, Hunter et al

