Introduction: What is Trigger Finger?

Trigger finger is a condition that causes the finger to lock in place when bent, making it very difficult to straighten again. When the finger does finally straighten, it may make a snapping or popping sound. The medical term for trigger finger is stenosing tenosynovitis.

Trigger finger happens when the tendons (tough bands of tissue connecting the muscles to the bones) in the finger become inflamed. Under normal circumstances, tendons easily glide through the sheath that protects them, and work with the muscles to bend and straighten the finger. When a tendon becomes inflamed, it no longer easily moves through the narrow sheath, and gets “stuck,” or pops upon finally straightening.

When the condition occurs in the thumb, it is often called “trigger thumb.”
Symptoms of Trigger Finger
Those with trigger finger experience some or all of the following symptoms:

- Stiffness of the finger(s)
- A popping sensation when the finger is bent or moved
- Tenderness at the base of the finger or palm
- A bump at the base of the finger
- Catching or locking in a bent position
- Soreness in the affected finger

What Causes Trigger Finger?
The causes of trigger finger are not always clear. Sometimes trigger finger can be the result of another medical condition that affects tissue, such as rheumatoid arthritis, gout, or diabetes.

Trigger finger is common in people who perform repetitive gripping actions or prolonged, strenuous grasping. Occupational examples include those that operate power tools, or musicians that are constantly playing instruments. An injury to the palm or base of the hand can also cause trigger finger if the tendon becomes inflamed or the sheath is damaged.

Trigger finger is more common in women and tends to occur between 40 and 60 years of age, but has been seen in patients of both sexes and of all ages.

Treatment of Trigger Finger or Trigger Thumb
It’s very important to seek treatment immediately if you are experiencing hand or finger pain. If left untreated, trigger finger can progress and lead to the finger catching or locking in the bent position, and could ultimately lead to a finger or thumb that cannot be straightened without corrective surgery.

Typically trigger finger is treated by an orthopedic doctor trained in the treatment of hand and upper extremity conditions. X-rays or lab tests typically may not be necessary, as the condition can sometimes be identified with a physical exam of the hand and fingers.

To help determine the cause of trigger finger and the best treatment plan, the doctor may ask about symptoms, length of symptoms, repetitive tasks, job functions, and previous injuries or conditions.

Trigger finger can usually be treated through conservative methods that include one or more of the following:

- Resting the hands
- Applying cold packs
- Anti-inflammatory medication
- Corticosteroid injections
- Trigger finger exercises
- Occupational therapy
- Short-term splinting
Activities known to aggravate trigger finger should be limited during the healing and recovery process. In extreme conditions, hand surgery may be recommended to restore normal movement and functionality.

**Summary**

If you have a job or hobby that requires repetitive gripping actions or prolonged, strenuous grasping, remember to take breaks throughout the day. Workspaces and techniques can also be adjusted in order to minimize the strain on your joints, which decreases one’s risk of getting trigger finger.

If you are currently experiencing hand or finger pain, please contact the office nearest you to schedule an appointment:

- **43940 Woodward Ave., Suite 100B**
  - Bloomfield Hills, MI 48302
  - Tel: 248-335-2638
  - Fax: 248-335-7726

- **43417 Schoenherr Rd.**
  - Sterling Heights, MI 48313
  - Tel: 586-532-0803
  - Fax: 586-532-0883

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This paper was published by Dr. Uzma H. Rehman, D.O.
Macomb Hand Surgery & Midwest Hand Therapy
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