



## Peter Callan Plastic Surgeon

Peter Callan Plastic Surgeon specialising in Cosmetic Surgery, Breast Surgery, Hand Surgery and Treatment of Skin

### Trigger finger

Trigger finger is a clicking or snapping that occurs on bending or straightening the fingers or thumbs. Digits can also lock in the bent (more common) or straightened position. The condition results when the tendons that bend the finger get caught in the narrow tunnels which hold the tendon attached to the bones of the fingers. When the finger bends or straightens the tight tunnel causes the tendon to develop a lump (such as when you catch part of a thread when threading a needle) and the lump stops the tendon from gliding freely. The problem usually occurs in the palm of the hand just at the base of the finger and pain is felt in this area as well as the finger. Trigger finger is more common in people who have carpal tunnel syndrome, who have had a carpal tunnel released, and in people with diabetes and some forms of arthritis. Most commonly however it occurs as an isolated phenomenon with no associations.

Steroid injections into the area can reduce the inflammation that causes the tendon lump. This can provide temporary relief and will cure the condition completely in most cases. Occasionally a second injection is required. It should be noted that this is a local steroid and will not spread around the body.

If the problem is ongoing the condition can be dealt with as minor day surgery done under local anaesthesia (with some sedation if required). This surgery involves enlarging the narrow tunnel through which the tendon passes, allowing it to glide freely rather than catching. This is a brief procedure and results in a small scar on the palm of the hand. Prior to undergoing this surgery you should advise Mr Callan of any medical problems you may have such as heart problems or high blood pressure, prior surgery you have had including hand surgery, and any medications you are taking including aspirin.

Complications of this surgery are rare. They can include wound infection or bleeding, hand stiffness, scar tenderness. Usually recovery is rapid (weeks) and complete.