



# Holladay Physical Medicine

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This Information is about this condition in general. Every individual has a unique presentation. Once you understand this information, consult the doctor on any specific questions about your condition.

## *Game Keepers Thumb – Skiers Thumb*

Skier's Thumb is an injury of the ulnar collateral ligament of the metacarpophalangeal (MCP) joint. More simply stated, the tissue on the index finger-side of the large thumb "knuckle" rips. This ripping can be partial or complete. It can also involve a portion of the bone.



Another name for this injury is "Gamekeeper's thumb." Historically, the British small game keepers would dispatch the rabbits and chickens by holding the animal's neck between the thumb and index finger and quickly snap the neck. This mechanism had the same result on the ulnar collateral ligament, but it was usually a more gradual tearing of this thumb ligament than with a skiing accident. As you can imagine, most skiing accidents are not gradual.

How are Skier's or Gamekeeper's Thumb injuries diagnosed? The patient has a painful, swollen thumb at the MCP joint that can usually be localized to the area ripped. Most times, the far end of the ligament pulls off the base of the Proximal Phalanx. About 50 percent (or more) of the time, the ligament gets caught above a fibrous layer called the adductor aponeurosis and will never heal effectively. This is called a "Stener Lesion" and heals best with surgery to put the ligament back where it belongs.

If the joint is stable after the injury, four weeks of thumb spica immobilization are usually adequate to allow healing. If the joint is not stable, it gaps or moves out of position with stress. In these instances, surgery is the treatment of choice.

Surgery done early can involve ligament repair and pinning. Surgery done late may also require using a portion of a tendon from the wrist to rebuild or reconstruct this vital ulnar collateral ligament.

### **I. Pathophysiology**

- A. Ulnar collateral ligament rupture
- B. Occurs at first metacarpophalangeal joint (thumb base)
  - 1. Skier falls with pole strap wrapped at wrist
  - 2. Pole strap levers thumb into abduction and extension

### **II. Signs**

- A. Pain at medial base of thumb (ulnar aspect)
- B. Test active and passive thumb abduction
- C. Assess thumb metacarpophalangeal joint laxity
  - 1. Thumb flexed to 30 degrees
  - 2. Thumb in extension

### **III. Grading**

- A. Grade 1 sprain: No laxity
- B. Grade 2 sprain: Increased laxity, but firm endpoint
- C. Grade 3 sprain: Increased laxity with no firm endpoint

#### IV. **Management**

- A. Indications for Surgical Repair: Unstable thumb
  - 1. No endpoint in abduction of thumb
- B. Splinting
  - 1. Molded plastic thumb lock immobilizer
- C. Dorsal Taping (0.5 inch tape)
  - 1. Apply anchor strips at wrist and over distal thumb
  - 2. Start tape at anchor strip at wrist
    - a. Apply over web space between thumb and index
    - b. Attach at distal anchor strip on thumb
  - 3. Build upwards with consecutive tapes

#### **Non Operative Treatment:**

- Ozone injections in the tendon
- Eccentric exercise routines
- Bi-polar electrical stimulation
- Specific joint manipulation
- short arm cast with a thumb spica;

#### **- complications of non operative treatment:**

- main complication is failure of ligament to heal & resulting in instability of joint;
- gross instability is usually caused by Stener's lesion;

### **USE OF PRESCRIPTION DRUGS**

We do not prescribe drugs nor recommend their use if harmful side-effects are associated with your complaints. We also do not, in any case, recommend changes in the use of prescription drugs that a licensed physician has given you. If you believe alterations in those prescriptions are in the best interest of your health, always consult with the prescribing physician before making any changes.

### **NUTRITION AND SUPPLEMENTATION:**

The ideal situation for nutrition in any injury or disease is first to eat whole foods, and to avoid processed foods, fast foods preservatives, refined carbohydrates and sugar. We have much information on our web page under Absolute Health Clinic. The physical medicine modalities we will provide you will help reduce the symptoms in the time we have projected. If you want to heal, this step is something you will need to take.

Nowadays, even if you do all of those things, you need to realize that our food supply has been gradually depleted. The pure ingredients needed to maintain body function, metabolism and immunity have been drastically reduced. We recommend only whole food supplements. Studies are clear that synthetic vitamins and mineral supplements are not only not helpful to the body in most cases, but can be toxic. Don't expect them to take the place of what we recommend here. They will not help you sufficiently to heal properly. The following list has been prioritized to help you gradually begin to supplement your improved diet and provide your body with the ingredients it needs to restore or improve your immune response and then provide the raw materials in usable form to repair the damaged or diseased tissue. The degree to which you can implement these items will largely determine how fast you recover and more importantly whether or not you have a recurrence or relapse of the symptoms again soon.

These products are all produced by Standard Process. You may obtain them on line from Amazon or other distributors if you like or we can order them for you and save you an average of \$5 per bottle plus you can avoid shipping charges.

### **GENERAL DAILY SUPPLEMENTS**

Catalyn  
Tuna Omega-3 oil  
Calcium Lactate  
Trace Minerals B12  
Cataplex D  
Prolamine Iodine

### **SPECIFIC FOR THIS CONDITION**

Biost  
Glucosamine Sulphate  
Ligaplex II  
Calcifood

Specific dosages will be provided by the doctor.

We have many other specific items for a variety of health deficient conditions. Consult our web page or ask the doctor.

### **HOME REMEDIES AND MEDICINES**

After the first 1-3 days when you should be using 5-8 minutes of cold packs, utilize moist heat packs on a daily basis during the first phase of treatment. 15 minutes is the maximum therapeutic dose for heat in this condition. The application may be repeated with at least 15 minutes of non-heat rest in between. This will help relax tight muscle fibers and bring blood to the region. Hot tubs and baths with Epsom salts provide temporary relief.

The use of over-the-counter medications for pain and inflammation may be seen as necessary at first depending on your pain level and tolerance. Understand that we depend on your natural immune response to function well in order to heal this disorder. Some pain relievers and most anti-inflammatory medications shut off the inflammatory response which is what triggers your body's immune response mechanisms. If you need pain medicines of any kind to continue to function or to be able to do the exercise routines we have recommended, use good judgement in when you use them. We strongly suggest you consider ice packs for 5-10 minutes for pain relief and mechanical positioning of the injured areas to relieve pressure and pain. The more you are able to do these procedures and avoid medications, the faster your immune response will be effective and the sooner you will be out of pain and begin healing. The sooner you can stop taking pain medication, the better it will be for your healing.

### **EXERCISES:**

Exercises should be specific, performed at the right time and in a particular order. They should be simple and aimed at pain relief and stabilization at first. Seek advice from your chiropractic physician on when to do these exercises and how often. When performed correctly, rehabilitation exercises can be the key to avoiding multiple episodes of pain and maintaining the function of the muscles and joints.

Our goal here is to have you begin exercises as soon as the joint mobility has been restored sufficiently. Consistent and proper exercise rehabilitation will shorten your treatment time and help reduce recurrence of the same disorder.

We offer a video training featuring exercises specifically designed and proven effective if properly performed for the rehabilitation of this condition. These video files are available on our web page at [www.holladayphysicalmedicine.com](http://www.holladayphysicalmedicine.com) ---follow that link, then the exercise pulldown menu at the top center of the home page, choose therapeutic and then scroll down to:

Wrist,

then also and review

elbow

and perform them daily as soon as you can work it into your schedule. Along with the physical medicine we have recommended, it is the regular performance of these exercises that will get you well and keep you well.

## **OTHER INFORMATION:**

We offer a wide variety of health information at our web site. [www.holladayphysicalmedicine.com](http://www.holladayphysicalmedicine.com) All patients are welcome to use our information to improve your life and maintain your spinal health.

This information is provided to you as a health service by Dr. Bruce Gundersen, DC, DIANM. He is board certified by the International Academy of Neuromusculoskeletal Medicine and currently serves as chairman of the examination board for the Academy. He is also the President of the Utah College of Chiropractic Orthopedists and clinical director and chief clinician at Holladay Physical Medicine. He has practiced physical and regenerative medicine for over 40 years.