

Jarred finger

Summary

Jarred finger is a description of the mechanism, typically a force directed longitudinally along a straight finger. A ball to the end of the finger is the most common.

Symptoms

- Immediate pain and swelling;
- Deformity suggests a dislocation or broken bone.

Diagnosis

Often patients don't seek medical attention, assuming it is a partial ligament injury (sprain). This is often the case, but **some injuries need closer attention**, including;

- Volar plate injury;
- Central slip injury.

An x-ray should be done to exclude a dislocation and to assess the extent of bony injury.

Volar plate injury is when the ligament on the flexor side of the proximal interphalangeal (PIP) joint pulls off the middle bone of the finger. **The finger can often be mobilised but if there is a large bony fragment it can lead to joint malalignment (subluxation).** This may need close supervision, hand therapy or surgery.

Central slip injury is when the central portion of the extensor tendon pulls off the dorsal side of the middle bone. This **can be difficult to diagnose** in a painful, swollen finger. It **needs close supervision with a hand therapist to prevent a boutonniere deformity and dysfunction** in the future.

