

TREATMENT AND PREVENTION OF HAND TEARS

Causes

Your chances of sustaining a skin laceration during training/competition increase significantly if:

1. You have soft (unconditioned) hands with little or no callus build-up or
2. You have too much callus build up that makes bumps or ridges on the surface of your hands



Treatment

Once you get a rip, follow this treatment procedure immediately.

1. Carefully cut any hanging skin away directly from the point of attachment with some small scissors or nail clippers.
2. Wash your hands with antibacterial soap, water and alcohol gel (e.g. 1st defence) to remove impurities/bacteria.
3. Consider antibacterial ointment (Bactroban – available from Pippa or your GP) or tea tree oil.
4. Before you go to bed that evening:
 - Wash your hands with antibacterial soap, water and alcohol gel (e.g. 1st defence) one more time
 - Apply Bactroban/tea tree oil to the fresh wound (if required)
 - Cover with a small bandage or tape to allow the cream to work and prevent infection. If the rip is very deep (on well callused hands), you can also wear a glove on the hand.
5. When you wake up the next morning, wash your hands with soap and water and apply Bactroban if required. DO NOT cover the tear from this point forward to allow the wound to dry out.
6. At 12pm and 6pm consider applying surgical spirit to harden the repairing skin.

Training with a Skin Tear

Follow the following taping guidelines during training whilst the skin is healing.

Option 1

1. Tape an 'anchor' strip of 4cm zinc oxide tape around the wrist (Photo 1)
2. Tear off a length of 4cm zinc oxide tape. Split the strip of tape lengthwise from one end to about the mid-point (Photo 2)
3. Place the tape on the hand with the solid half directly over the rip on the palm and with the start of the split right at the base of the finger (Photo 3)
4. Press the tape down against the skin, starting from the inside of the wrist all the way to the split tape on the back of the hand and the top of the wrist. You can add a second layer of this tape on top of the first or additional protection (Photo 4)
5. Use more tape around the wrist to secure the loose ends of the tape (Photo 5)
6. When the grip is complete, the hand should be able to open completely.

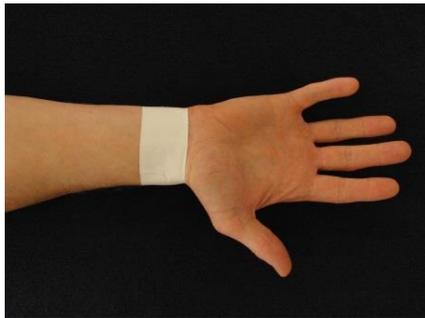


Photo 1

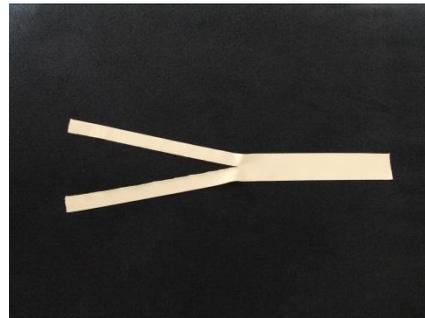


Photo 2

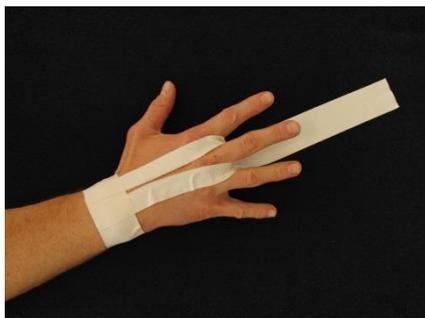


Photo 3



Photo 4



Option 2

1. Tape an 'anchor' strip of 4cm tape around the wrist (Photo 1)
2. Place a strip of 2cm tape from the wrist anchor (towards thumb side) across the palm, wrapping around the middle finger back to the start position (Photo 2 & 3)
3. Repeat, starting and finishing at towards the little finger side of the wrist anchor (Photo 4)
4. Use more tape around the wrist to secure the loose ends of the tape (Photo 5)
5. When the grip is complete, the hand should be able to open completely (Photo 6)

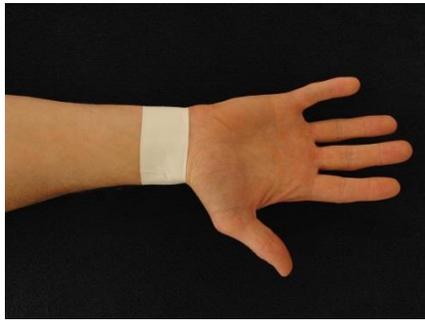


Photo 1

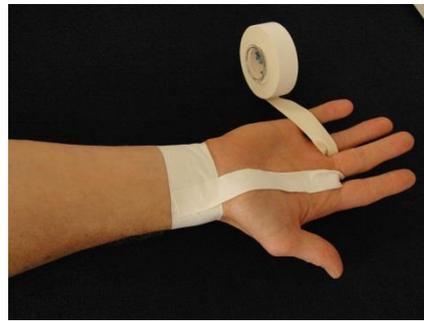


Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 4



Photo 5



Photo 6

Prevention

It is your responsibility to manage the skin on your hands to prevent the hands from developing blisters and tears.

Soft, thin-skinned, generally deconditioned hands

If your hands are soft and de-conditioned, you must slowly build up your calluses to meet the demands of training. Through discussion with your coach, it is important to slowly build your hand-intensive exercise whilst the thickness and robustness of the skin develops. Failure to do so will result in continual damage and the failure to develop protective calluses.

Management of well-conditioned hands

It is very important to maintain the quality of the skin by keeping the surface well groomed. The aim is to keep the overall skin thickness consistent throughout and the surface is smooth. Failure to do this will result in uneven skin 'ridges', which will eventually tear.

Regularly shave the calluses down to a level that maintains a relatively thick yet consistent depth of callus throughout the hand. In order to achieve this, groom the hands always after a hot shower or bath when the skin is still slightly swollen. You can use many tools to achieve this including pumice stones, 'Ped-Eggs' etc. Spend time working out what works for you.

REMEMBER...Don't overdo it...always leave enough skin to facilitate your training the following day. The goal is an even and consistent thickness of hard skin throughout the entire palm.

Illness and infections

Minimise your risk of infection by paying attention to personal hygiene:

- Always wash hands after training and before eating
- Use antibacterial hand gel when appropriate
- Do not share chalk bags or drinks bottles
- Ensure all personal gym equipment is hygienically clean before use

* Report any symptoms of illness/infection as soon as possible to the medical team *