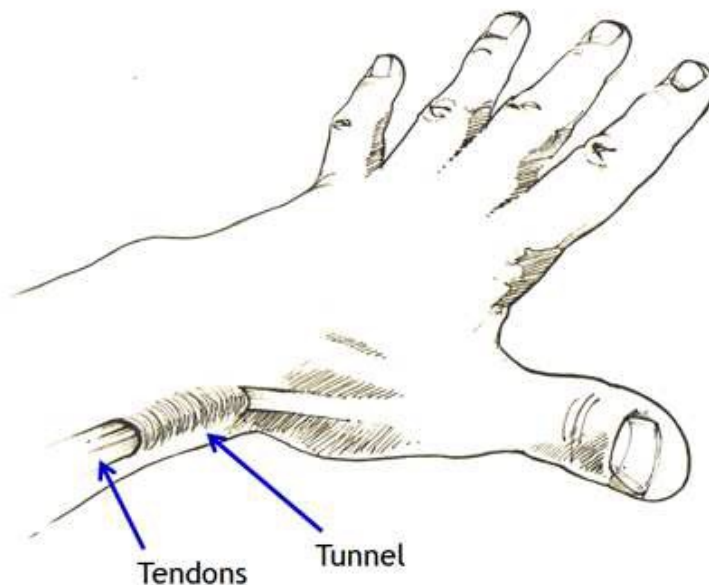


## Thumb Tendonitis (De Quervain's tenosynovitis)

### What is De Quervain's tenosynovitis?

De Quervain's tenosynovitis is a common painful condition that causes swelling of the tendon sheath (which covers the tendons as they run through a tunnel on the thumb side of the wrist) or of the tendons themselves. Due to the swelling, the tendons' ability to glide smoothly back and forth to move the thumb is restricted. This is not harmful, but it can be very painful.



### What causes De Quervain's tenosynovitis?

De Quervain's tenosynovitis can be caused by activities that require frequent extension of the thumb or wrist motions from side to side. It is also common in new mothers, as they perform repetitive movements of the hand by lifting their babies, and during pregnancy, possibly due to hormonal changes or fluid retention. In some cases, the condition develops for no known reason.

### What are the symptoms?

You may experience:

- pain on the thumb side of the wrist, which is exacerbated by extending the thumb upwards ('thumbs up' position), turning a key, wringing out clothes or twisting the wrist towards the little finger
- swelling around the site of pain
- difficulty gripping objects
- clicking or snapping of the tendons (in rare cases).

### How is it treated?

There are a number of steps involved in treatment. We will always try the least severe form of treatment first, progressing to further treatment if this fails.

**Activity**-by avoiding activities that aggravate the condition and using a splint (a device used for support or immobilisation) may allow the condition to settle.

**Medication**-Taking regular non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) can stop the swelling and pain.

**Injections**-If rest and pain medicines do not work, steroid injections can be injected into the affected area.

