



Clinical Pearls

PRE-OPERATIVE SERIAL CASTING FOR DUPUYTREN'S CONTRACTURE INVOLVING THE PIP JOINT

It is well known that the outcome following Dupuytren's fasciectomy is often poor when surgical release of a severe PIP joint flexion contracture must also occur. Pre-operative serial casting of the PIP joint prior to fasciectomy, however, can make the surgical excision of the Dupuytren's easier and improve the final outcome. (Dupuytren's contracture will respond to serial casting/splinting, but one cannot expect permanent change; when the casting/splinting is discontinued the contracture recurs.)

Surgeons I have worked with describe easier

excision of the fascial bands because of diminished convolution, having enough skin length to avoid the need for a skin graft, and a reprieve from performing a capsulotomy.

You may want to discuss the possibility of pre-operative serial casting with your referring surgeon for those patients with Dupuytren's contracture who have PIP joint flexion contractures. Your surgeon will appreciate the fact that pre-operative therapy can make the surgery technically easier!!!



Dupuytren's: Combined MP and PIP joint flexion contractures are ideal for pre-operative serial casting.



First step is a volar plaster slab across all joints, reinforced with either a small piece of thermoplastic material or a small longitudinal roll of plaster of Paris.



Final step is wrapping plaster of Paris around the entire finger to hold the volar slab in place so both joints are held at easy maximum extension.