

# FULL CIRCLE HAND THERAPY

YOU'RE IN GOOD HANDS



## ULNA COLLATERAL LIGAMENT INJURY OF THE THUMB (SKIERS THUMB)

The UCL, or ulnar collateral ligament, is located in the middle thumb joint, and provides support to the thumb during grip and pinch. It is the most common ligament injury in the thumb. This injury is known as skier's or gamekeeper's thumb.

### CAUSES

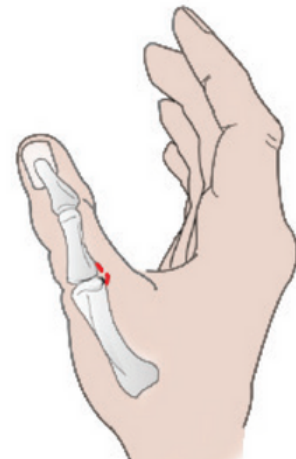
Most often, injuries occur during sport or recreational activities, such as skiing, football, biking and soccer. Any extreme force to the thumb in the opposite direction can cause a sprain or strain, but injuries can also occur as a result of a fall, or jamming the thumb.

### SYMPTOMS

Pain and swelling in the middle joint of the thumb can occur right after injury, with possible bruising and stiffness in the joint. With this injury, activities such as holding a drinking glass or writing may be difficult. Weakness may be a symptom as well, with a decreased ability to grip or pinch any object with the thumb and hand.

### TREATMENT

An X-ray of the thumb is usually taken to determine where or if there is a fracture (avulsion of the UCL or fracture of one of the bones of the thumb) and the stability of the thumb will be tested with gentle pressure from each side, and compare this to the other thumb. If these clinical tests build a picture indicating a UCL injury, a custom orthosis is fabricated and worn full time for 4-6 weeks.



### HOW CAN WE HELP?

We will fabricate a hand based orthosis to immobilise the thumb and allow the ligament to heal in the correct position. We will then guide you through an appropriate strengthening routine to ensure a full return to activity and work.