

# Why Visit a Hand Surgeon?

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The hand is a unique area of the human body that is made up of bone, joints, ligaments, tendons, muscles, nerves, skin, and blood vessels. These elements must all be in good working order for the hand to function well. The relationship between all these structures is delicate and refined. An injury or disease can affect any or all of these structures and impair the use of the hand.



A qualified hand surgeon is trained to diagnose and treat all problems related to these different structures in the hand, wrist, and forearm. Hand surgeons have received specialized additional training in the treatment of hand problems in addition to their board certified specialty training in orthopaedic surgery, plastic surgery, or general surgery. To become members of the American Society for Surgery of the Hand, hand surgeons must have completed a full year of such additional training and must pass a rigorous certifying examination.

Many hand surgeons also have expertise with problems of the elbow, arm, and shoulder. Some hand surgeons treat only children, some treat only adults, and some treat both. Common problems treated include carpal tunnel syndrome, tennis elbow, wrist pain, sports injuries of the hand and wrist, fractures of the hand, wrist, and forearm, and trigger fingers. Other problems treated by hand surgeons include arthritis, nerve and tendon injuries, and congenital limb differences (birth defects).



Not all problems treated by a hand surgeon need surgery. Hand surgeons often recommend non-surgical treatments, such as medication, splints, therapy, and injections. Hand surgeons are specialists devoted to hand care.

If you have pain in your fingers, hand, wrist or arm, or have other upper-extremity related concerns, you may want to consult a hand surgeon. To locate an ASSH-member hand surgeon near you, please visit [www.assh.org](http://www.assh.org) and click on the "Find a Hand Surgeon" link.

