



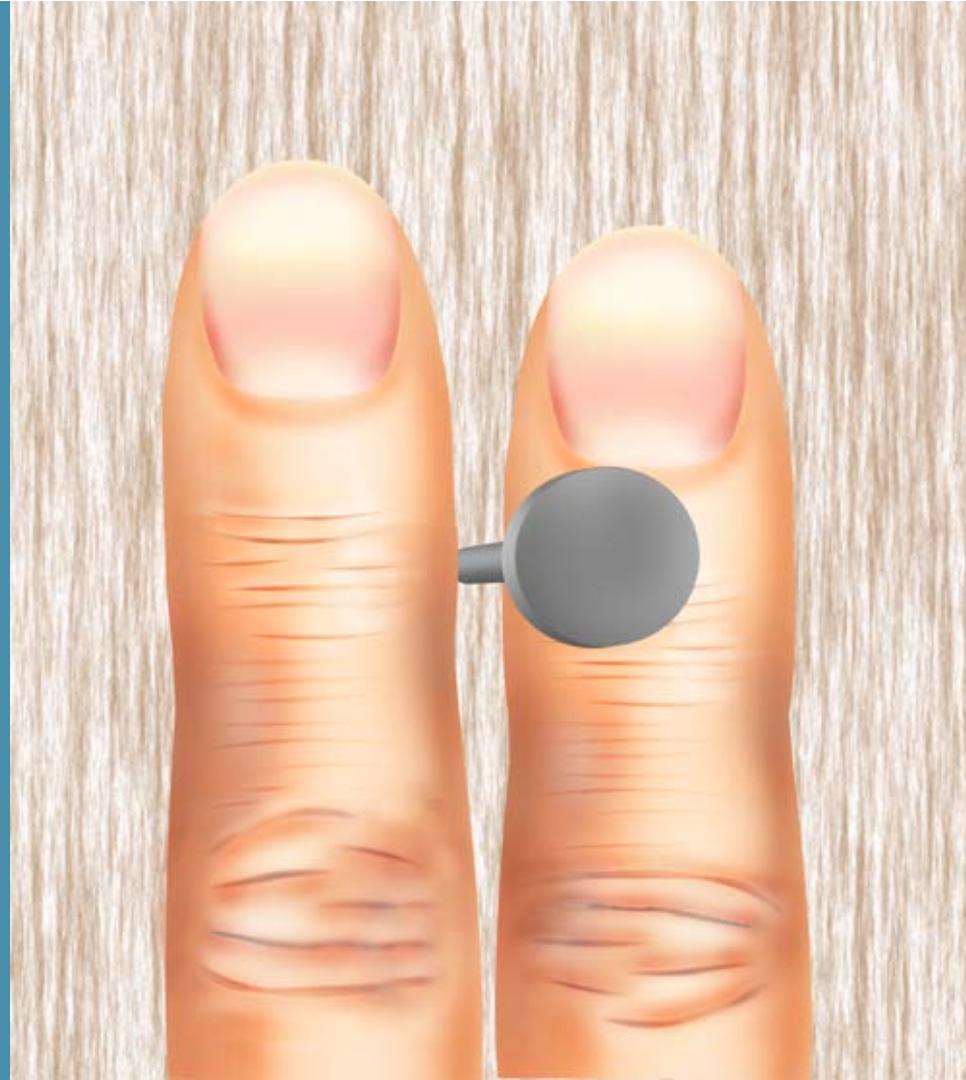
How To Mend A Smashed Fingernail

CAUTION: *the following procedure is not recommended in all similar cases of injury to the fingers. Significant damage to the nail bed or fracture in the finger bone may require the services of a physician. All I can tell you is that it worked for me. Proceed at your own risk.*

or

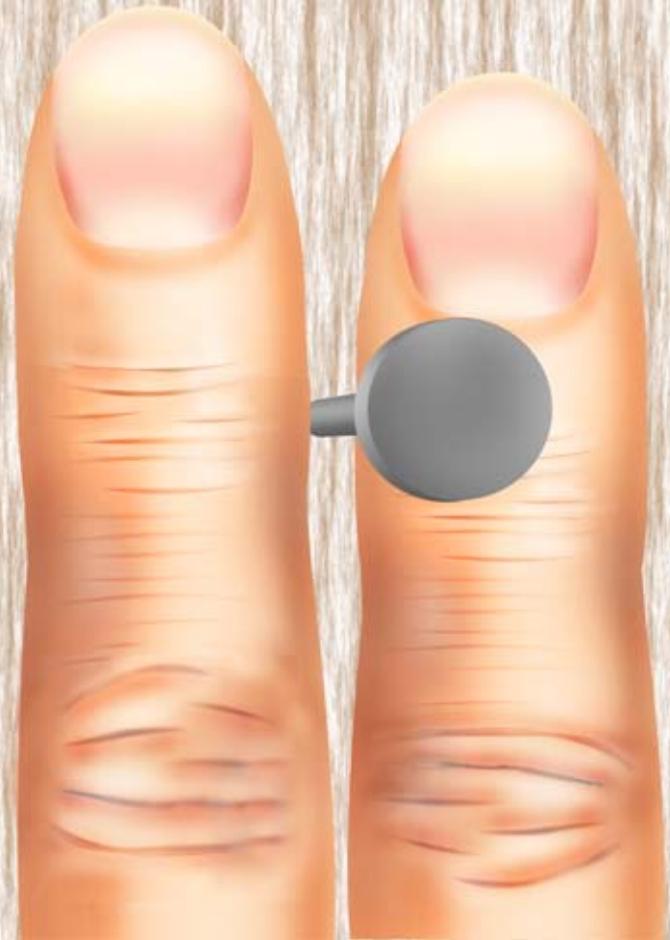
How *Not* To Use a
Hammer

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How To Mend A Smashed Fingernail

I was tired. I'd been hammering wood panels on your new fence for over six hours. My arm was getting tired and heavy, but I was almost finished...*I was hammering a nail into the final panel!*



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I positioned the nail straight out between my middle and index fingers, giving it a little tap with my hammer, just to set it into the wood. But right before the money drive I neglected to move my fingers away. The hammer missed the head of the nail and smashed directly into the fingernail of my index finger.



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Now I'd done it. There was blood under the fingernail. Although the nail (meaning the *fingernail*, and not the "nail" I missed with the hammer) still seemed firmly attached to the nail bed (the underlying tissue), I figured I was probably going to lose my fingernail. I debated whether I should run to the doctor. But it was Saturday afternoon, the med center may have been closed, and my finger hurt...a lot. Also, I was afraid the doctor was going to make it hurt worse. I envisioned him giving my fingertip a couple of shots to anesthetize my finger before he yanked off the nail.



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I washed my hands. After washing I got a clearer idea of the extent of the damage. There was still blood pooled under the fingernail, and the finger tip past the first joint was in considerable pain. There was also bruising around the finger, and the fingernail was somewhat loose around its perimeter.

Most of the pain was coming from the pressure of the blood that was built up under the fingernail. I look up “hammered finger” (or something like that) on the internet, and found the following information: *remove the blood and you relieve the pain.*



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This next step took some nerve, but it really didn't hurt. And it resulted in the immediate relief of the pain.

I found a paper clip, then bent and extended one end of it. I held the end of the clip over a range burner until the tip got red hot, then carefully tapped it several times against the base of my fingernail until it burned a hole through it. The nail burned through fairly easily.

I needed to reheat the tip several times, but kept tapping until the blood finally spilled out through the hole.



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As soon as the paper clip penetrated through the fingernail the blood drained out freely. Using my other hand to press the nail down evenly, I was able to remove all the blood underneath the nail. I then applied a tissue to remove the blood.

Most of the pain was now gone.



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I wrapped a bandage around my finger, then went out and bought myself a large box of magnesium sulfate (Epsom salt). I plugged up the bathroom sink, filled it partially with some hot water, dissolved in a high concentration of Epsom salt, then soaked my finger in the solution for about 10 minutes.



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After the soak, I drained the finger again, then applied a bandage coated with an antiseptic salve. I left the bandage on overnight, then removed it in the morning.



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I repeated the process of draining, soaking, then applying a bandage twice a day for a few days, allowing my finger to air dry for at least a half-hour before reapplying another bandage so it didn't have that water-logged look.

After a few days of draining and soaking my finger the fluid began to turn to a clear, yellowish color. Over time the fluid became even clearer.



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After about 7-10 days the amount of drainage lessened, and the redness around the finger also diminished.



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After about 10-12 days, using a fingernail clipper, I carefully clipped off as much of the dead nail as I could. This not only prevented me from reinjuring the nail bed and regenerating cuticle, but also helped keep the nail bed clean and dry. I clipped the nail as if I was clipping a normal nail, into a rounded shape. After two weeks I allowed my finger to dry out by avoiding the use of a bandage.



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After a couple of weeks the fingernail stopped draining and began to repair itself from the nail bed up. The nail bed looked pretty unattractive while the nail grew back. At first the appearance was alarming, because it looked so bumpy and *disfigured*, and I was afraid the nail would never grow back normally.

I continued clipping the dead nail down as far as I could, to just above the hole; I couldn't clip any further than that, and besides, I wanted to watch how the nail grew back over time.



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After about two months the nail grew a small distance from the cuticle outward. The redness was practically gone and the hole had moved up a couple of centimeters. The nail bed was still very bumpy and ridged, but a new, healthy nail was slowly growing over it.



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After about five months the nail had grown out considerably. Although the nail bed was still ripply near the fingertip, the new nail was growing in smoothly. There was a couple of centimeters of dead nail left that extended beyond the leading edge of the growth, which included the hole.



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After about seven-and-a-half months the nail was almost completely grown out. The last piece of old fingernail was still visible beyond the fingertip, and the drain hole had migrated close to the edge.



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Eight months later and I had a brand new fingernail.

You'll have to excuse me now...my wife wants me to hang a picture on the living room wall. I think I'll use screws this time...

