

YOUR GUIDE TO SAFE & COMFORTABLE BINDING

Information & Tips



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Binders

Binders when used correctly, are the safest way to compress breast tissue to achieve the appearance of a flat chest ¹

Full-length binders offer more shoulder support and compress the chest and stomach ^{1,2}



Half-length or **tri-top binders** are also available, and are usually more breathable and comfortable ^{1,2}

Sizing a Binder

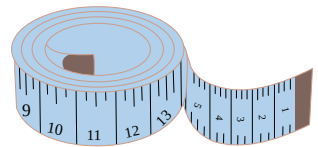


Wearing the correct size binder is key to binding safely

- **Smaller Binders ≠ Flatter Chest**
- It actually increases your risk of injury ¹

Binders should feel tight, but you should be able to comfortably breathe deeply ^{1,2}

To Find Your Size



Step 1: Wear a shirt and no bra/binder

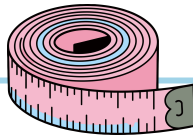
Step 2: Snugly measure around the fullest part of the chest and underneath the chest crease ^{1,2}

Step 3: Add these measurements and divide by two ^{1,2}

Binders (Continued)

Sizing a Binder (Continued)

- **Check the sizing instructions** for the binder brand you are purchasing, as they can vary ^{1,4}
- Bodies change over time and binders can loosen with wear, so it is important to **regularly re-evaluate your binder's fit** ²



Caring for a Binder

- Maintaining binder hygiene is important for skin health and binder longevity. **Binders should be washed every 1–3 days, or daily if sweating or wearing regularly** ^{2,3}
- **Hand washing your binder** with soap and warm water is generally recommended, followed by **hang drying** ⁵
- **Avoid using a dryer**, as it can shrink and damage the material ^{3,5}



Resources

Low-Cost/No-Cost Material Access

- **Point of Pride** ⁴ → Free Binders
 - **Who is this for?** Transgender and/or gender diverse folks who may not have the financial means or safe access to femme shapewear
 - **What do I do?** Measure self (video guide shows how) and submit a Google form; will send email when ready to ship
 - **How can I track my items?** Program Status Dashboard shows what requests are currently processing
- **The Tumblr Transgender Clothing Exchange** ⁴
 - **Who is this for?** Folks interested in swapping clothing items; exact rules are created by the organizers
 - **Note:** Always be cautious when interacting with strangers online
- **Out on the Shelf** → Folks can donate garments to the gender gear box; check in for current inventory!



Additional Product Sources

- **Cedar Lily Bra Boutique** → Located in Guelph and carries binders, can help with sizing
- **Origami Customs** → Binders and gender gear that are hand made in Canada by Trans folks ⁶
- **UrBasics** → Canadian business selling binders and gender gear ⁶

Removing a Binder

Method #1: Overhead ¹

Lift the shoulder straps and pull upwards until the compression reaches the neck, then continue to pull the body out of the binder.

Method #2: Step-In ¹

Grab the bottom of the binder and pull it up and over the head, turning it inside out.



Helpful Tips

- After removing the binder, it is important to **stretch the arms, shoulders, chest, and back to relieve tightness** ^{2,4}
- **Taking a few deep breaths and coughing** can also help clear any potential fluid build-up in the lungs ^{2,4}

Putting on a Binder

Method #1: Overhead ¹

Put the binder on like a t-shirt, pulling it down over the chest and guiding arms through the armholes, taking care to prevent it from rolling up.

Method #2: Step-In ¹

While holding the shoulder straps, step into the neck hole as if putting on pants, then pull the binder up and slip arms through the armholes.



Helpful Tips



Before putting on a binder, ensure the skin is clean and completely dry ⁵

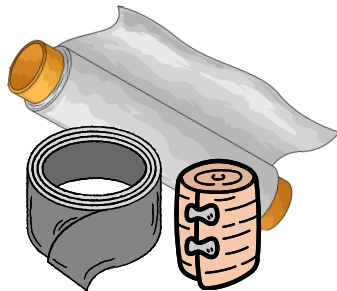
- For first-time users, it is highly recommended to **have a trusted person nearby for assistance** ¹
- When positioning the chest, **use a mirror to flatten tissue towards the armpits** to create a pec-like appearance ¹
- **Ensure nipples are not bound in a downward position**, this can damage tissue and skin, potentially affecting the results of future top surgery ¹

Other Binding Materials

Alternative compression wear options

- **Sports bras** (especially if they have a high Lycra content or are layered for increased compression) ^{3,4,5}
- **Athletic compression shirts** made of Lycra or Spandex ^{2,4,5}
- **Layering shirts** ^{2,3,4,5}
- **Neoprene compression wear** ^{1,5}
- It is important to note that neoprene is not very breathable and presents an increased risk of skin breakdown or overheating ⁵
- **Kinetic tape**, such as KT Tape or TransTape ⁵
- Not everyone will be able to wear tape due to individual physique
- If binding with tape, it is important to
 - **Check your skin** for any irritation daily ⁵
 - Wear a **nipple guard**
 - Remove it with a **skin-safe adhesive remover**
 - **Do not wrap the tape around your chest completely** ⁵

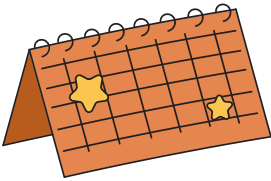
DO NOT bind with ACE bandages, plastic wrap, or duct tape ²
these may cause harm to your body or skin ⁴



Safety Considerations

Duration

- **Limiting the duration of binding** is critical for safety
- It is generally recommended to bind for **no more than 8–10 hours at a time** ^{2,4,7}
- For **individuals under 18, a maximum of 6 hours** is advised ²
- It is important to **never sleep in a binder** ^{1,2,4}



Take a break from binding if you experience chest pain, difficulty breathing, numbness, tingling, skin irritation, back pain, soreness, overheating, or dehydration ^{1,2,4}

Taking Breaks from Binding

- Taking a “**binder break**” every few days ⁵, or even **short breaks throughout the day** (e.g., 5–10 minutes during lunch or restroom breaks) ², allows the body to rest and muscles to stretch
- During these breaks, **focusing on deep breaths and stretching the chest and back muscles** is beneficial ^{2,4}
- **Carrying a sports top or looser compression garment** can be helpful for these breaks or for switching into after the maximum recommended binding time ²

Safety Considerations

Physical Activity and Hot Weather

- When engaging in **physical activity**, it is generally advised **not to wear a binder** ⁵
- If binding during exercise is desired, **opting for a sports bra** ² or an **athletic compression shirt** specifically designed for physical activity is recommended ⁴
- In hot weather, binders can increase body temperature and cause sweating ⁵
 - To help with this, try to **drink plenty of water**, and **bind less tightly** and for **shorter periods** ⁵
 - Wearing a **cotton undershirt** or using **baby powder** can help **absorb sweat and reduce irritation** ⁵
- **Swimming in binders** is generally **not recommended** if you will be physically exerting yourself or submerging your torso — **surf wear** or **athletic compression shirts** are better options



Helpful Tips

- **Building strength** in your back, shoulders, and chest wall via exercises and stretches **may help with the pain that binding can cause** ⁵
- When you begin binding, **start by wearing it for 1–3 hours each day** to help your body get used to the feeling ²
- **Consider alternatives to binding**, like sports bras, layering shirts, or wearing athletic compression wear on your days off from binding ⁴
- **Some binders come with zippers and velcro**, which can make them easier to put on and take off, especially for people with larger chests ⁴
- Wearing a **light shirt under your binder** or putting **baby powder** or cornstarch on your skin **can stop your binder from holding in sweat** ⁶



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