

# Theratape.com - Tips for Applying and Removing Kinesiology Tape

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Kinesiology tape is water resistant, yet breathable, allowing it to be worn for exercise, showering, or swimming. It dries quickly and seldom causes skin irritation. When properly applied, most kinesiology tape applications will last from 3-7 days. Following the tips below will ensure optimal benefits from each application.

## **PREPARING THE SKIN**

Skin should be completely dry and free of any lotions or oils. Wipe the entire area with rubbing alcohol, hand sanitizer or a pre-taping product like RockSauce. Apply tape at least 1 hour before sweating, swimming or showering – for best results, apply the night before. If applying after exercise, ensure that perspiration has completely stopped and skin has been cleaned before applying tape. Small amounts of body hair will not interfere with the effectiveness or adhesion of the tape. Areas with significant amounts of hair should be clipped close to the skin for best results – and for less pain when tape is removed!

## **PREPARING AND APPLYING THE TAPE**

**General** – Kinesiology tape can only be applied once, so avoid touching the adhesive side of the tape. To avoid skin irritation, the ends of each strip should be applied with no stretch. Make sure all ends are applied to skin, not to other pieces of tape. After applying, rub tape briskly from the center to the ends to activate the adhesive.

**Rolls** - Cut tape with sharp scissors, rounding corners to prevent ends from peeling prematurely. Tear the backing 2-3" from one end to create an 'anchor' – the first part that will be applied. Apply the anchor with no stretch in the tape, leaving the rest of the backing intact. Continue peeling the backing away in small segments as you apply the tape.

**Precut Applications** - Tear the backing at every serrated line before applying tape. Carefully follow instructions from product package, video or instruction manual.

**Precut Strips** – some brands have a serrated backing to create Y or edema strips, but others do not. If the backing is not serrated, fold it along the lines, then tear carefully along each line. Apply anchor end first, then remove backing from one section at a time and apply.

## **WEARING THE TAPE**

Try to prevent clothing or equipment from rubbing on the ends of the tape. To dry tape that has become wet, pat gently with a towel. Do not use a hair dryer – the adhesive is heat-activated, and may become difficult to remove. Any ends that begin to peel can be trimmed with scissors to prevent further peeling.

## **PRECAUTIONS**

Do not apply kinesiology tape to damaged skin – this includes scrapes, cuts, burns, sunburn or any type of rash or irritation.

The ends of each strip should be applied with zero stretch to prevent pulling on the skin that could lead to abrasions. If any type of irritation occurs, remove tape immediately.

## **DEALING WITH SKIN IRRITATION**

Kinesiology tape is made from cotton with a hypoallergenic acrylic adhesive. It contains no latex or medications, decreasing the likelihood of skin irritation. Individuals with extremely sensitive skin, however, may still experience rash, itching or irritation. There are now several 'gentle adhesive' tapes available for those with sensitive or fragile skin. In addition, the following products have been reported to minimize skin irritation when applied and allowed to dry prior to tape application: Benadryl® Itch Stopping Gel, Maalox® or Tens Clean Coat Skin Wipes.

The majority of skin problems are caused by tape being overstretched when applied. Keep in mind that the therapeutic benefits do not require any stretch in the tape at all – simply stretching the area being taped and applying the tape with "paper off" tension is enough to activate the components of the nervous system responsible for pain relief.

## **REMOVING THE TAPE**

Remove tape in the direction of hair growth, which is usually away from the center of the body on the trunk, and in a downward direction on the arms or legs. To minimize discomfort, press the skin at the end of the taped area while gently peeling tape back. Tape that is still strongly adhered to skin may be loosened by soaking with baby oil, vegetable oil or a special adhesive remover for 5-10 minutes before removing.

## **IF TAPE WON'T STICK**

Check that all skin and tape preparation and application guidelines above were followed. It can be difficult to get tape to stick well on areas that sweat heavily, like the hands and feet. Tape on areas that are rubbed by clothing or equipment, or receive repeated body contact can also come off prematurely, despite the best precautions. In these cases, an adhesive spray such as KT Tape Ultra Stick can be used to help tape stick. Spray lightly where tape will end, wait until area is tacky, then apply tape.