

## How to apply compression hosiery

### Why do I need to wear compression hosiery?

Before wearing compression hosiery an assessment should be carried out by a clinician to determine your suitability. If you have been prescribed compression hosiery, making sure that you wear it is really important. Compression therapy is the main treatment for conditions that arise as a result of venous disease. It helps to return the blood in your legs back to your heart, preventing it from pooling in your leg veins where it can cause skin changes such as aching, tired legs, varicose veins, swelling and venous leg ulcers.

### The benefits of wearing compression hosiery

You will have been prescribed compression hosiery to help one or more of the conditions described above. If you have a venous leg ulcer, wearing compression can help it to heal and prevent the wound from returning, or can make your symptoms more manageable. As venous disease is a long-term condition, it is important to wear your compression in the long-term too to keep your limb as healthy as it can be. If you are advised to wear compression hosiery, it is important that you do wear it, ideally every day.

### How to apply your hosiery

Applying your hosiery isn't complicated but it is important to get it right. It can be tricky as the garment should fit snugly to work properly, however, it should never be too tight or really



difficult to apply. Overleaf are some simple steps to guide you through applying your hosiery.

If you still find the steps difficult, for example if you are unable to pull or grip the hosiery firmly, there are application aids that can help (see inside). It is important that your hosiery is comfortable and that you can apply and remove it easily. If you have any further problems you should speak to your clinician who should help you to find an acceptable solution. For example, it may be that a compression wrap which fastens around your limb is a better choice for you.

## Application of hosiery without an application aid



### Step 1: Prepare the hosiery

To make the hosiery easier to put on, first turn it inside out. You can do this in 3 simple steps – reach, pinch and fold

**Reach:** Simply slip your hand down inside the hosiery, as far as the heel (1).

**Pinch:** Gently grasp the heel and, while still holding the heel (1).

**Fold:** Fold the top of the hosiery down to turn it inside out. This will leave the toe-area tucked-in (1).



### Step 2: Apply the hosiery

Slip your toes into the front of the hosiery and gently pull up the foot (2).

Now gather the hosiery from the top of the garment and gently pull towards the ankle and calf.



### Step 3: Adjust for comfort

Smooth out any wrinkles on the leg (3).

Pull the toe section forward. Smooth the ankle and in-step areas and make sure your toes are not restricted.

### Step 4: Repeat for the other leg

Applying your hosiery isn't complicated, but it is important to get it right. Here we explain how to apply your hosiery, including with an application aid if you need some extra help.

## Application of hosiery with an application aid: ActiGlide®



The **ActiGlide®** is designed to make it even easier to apply your own compression hosiery (1).

### Step 1: Prepare the ActiGlide®

To prepare the ActiGlide®, first fold it in half and thread the soft, flexible pin through the holes from the widest end, before securing the pin in the pocket at the end.

The ActiGlide® is now ready to use (2).



### Step 2: Apply the ActiGlide®

Slide the ActiGlide® over your toes, so that the flexible pin is under the sole of your foot. If applying closed toe hosiery, some people prefer to keep the pin on top.

The ActiGlide® should cover your foot, but don't try to pull it too far (3).



### Step 3: Apply your hosiery

Now you can put your hosiery on, without folding it, in the same way you would pull on a boot. Place the heel in position and spread the hosiery evenly over your foot (4).

### Step 4: Adjust the ActiGlide®

Now you're ready to move the hosiery up the leg, so you will need to adjust the ActiGlide®.

Pull the pin out of the back, and take hold of the black handle at the front.

Pull the ActiGlide® up the leg.



### Step 5: Adjust your hosiery

Follow the ActiGlide® up the leg in stages, easing the hosiery over it each time (5).

### Step 6: Adjust for comfort

Pull the ActiGlide® out of the hosiery. Smooth out any wrinkles on the leg.

### Step 7: Repeat for the other leg

Pull the ActiGlide® out of the hosiery.



## Frequently asked questions and answers

### How do I know if my hosiery fits correctly?

Compression hosiery should always be prescribed by a nurse or doctor to make sure it is right for you. Once you have your hosiery, your clinician should then guide you through your first application to make sure that it fits correctly and that you can apply and remove it without difficulty. Once you begin wearing your hosiery, it is still important that you undergo regular reassessment with your clinician to ensure that your garment is still right for you — your condition may change with time and your garment may need changing accordingly.

### How often do I need to replace my hosiery?

If your condition is stable, it is recommended that you renew your garment every six months. If your existing garment has lost elasticity, it should be replaced before this time. If at any stage there is a change in the condition of your limb, for example, if your leg becomes more swollen and your current garment becomes too tight, you should seek advice from your clinician, as explained above.

### How many garments do I need and how do I care for them?

Ideally you will be always be prescribed two garments: one to wear and one to wash. You can wash your hosiery at 40 degrees but do not iron or tumble dry as it can affect the elasticity of the garment. Ideally dry your hosiery in a flat position away from direct heat.

### What style of hosiery should I wear?

The best style of hosiery for you should be decided through discussion with your clinician. He/she can advise you on what is available to best improve your condition, and you can then state your personal preferences around colour, fabric, etc. For example, an open-toed style may be recommended to accommodate a long foot compared to a small calf size. This choice also allows access to the foot without removal of the garment, e.g. for washing or for chiropody appointments. A closed toe may be recommended if swelling extends to the foot and toes. For most conditions a below knee garment is an effective choice, and can be easier to put on and wear than longer choices.

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