

How to Use and Care for Your Compression Sleeve

A compression sleeve is used to treat lymphedema and worn to keep the swelling down in your arm. Your physical therapist will fit the compression sleeve to your arm and tell you how often you need to wear your sleeve. Here is information on when to wear your sleeve, how to put on your sleeve and how to care for your sleeve.

Always wear your sleeve when you:

- Exercise or do physical activity
- Garden or do yard work
- Do housework that requires a lot of effort, including when you vacuum or sweep
- Travel by airplane
- Go to work, if ordered by your physical therapist

Do not wear your sleeve:

- If it could become wet, including when you swim, bathe or wash dishes. A wet sleeve may irritate your skin.
- When you sleep. Your sleeve works best when your muscles are active – not when they are at rest.

Take off your sleeve, and call your Physical Therapist if you have any of these symptoms:

- Red, hot, irritated skin on your arm or hand
- Fingers that feel cold or have a blue color

This handout is for informational purposes only. Talk with your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.

Helpful hints/tips:

- Your sleeve should be snug but not too tight.
- Your sleeve should fit from your wrist to just below your armpit.
- If your sleeve has a seam, the seam should be towards the back of your arm.
- If your sleeve has a shoulder strap, the shoulder strap should stay on the outside of your arm.

How to put on the sleeve:

- Fold your sleeve in half.
- Slide the folded sleeve on your arm up to your elbow.
- Pull the folded part of the sleeve onto your upper arm. It may help to brace your arm by pushing your hand against a wall or tabletop
 - ▶ Work the sleeve up your arm until it is just below your armpit.
 - ▶ There should not be any creases or wrinkles in your sleeve. If some appear, smooth them out as much as possible.
 - ▶ Your physical therapist may tell you to use a glove or gauntlet. Pull the glove or gauntlet over your sleeve, if needed.



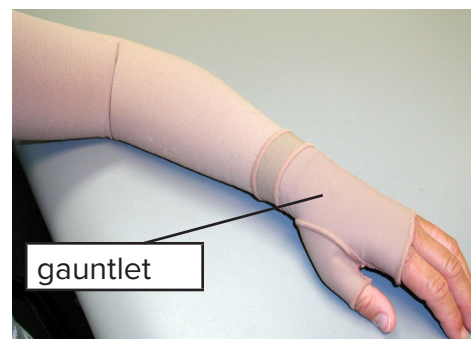
Folded sleeve up to the elbow.



Seam toward the back of the arm.



After the sleeve has been put on.



Sleeve with gauntlet.

Helpful Tips

- Use powder on your skin to make your sleeve pull on easier.
- Use kitchen rubber gloves with tread to smooth out creases and wrinkles.
- Put your sleeve on first thing in the morning each day.
- Rough fingernails and jagged rings can damage the fabric. Wearing a rubber glove can help to protect your garment.



Care Instructions for Your Sleeve

Follow the directions on the package for care instructions, including how to wash and dry your sleeve. Here are some general guidelines for the care of your sleeve:

- Wash and dry your sleeve after each use. This will keep your sleeve clean and make sure it fits your arm well.
- Use warm water and mild soap.
- **Do not** use fabric softener, bleach or other laundry additives.
- Use the gentle cycle in your washing machine or hand wash.
- Use the gentle cycle on the dryer or lay flat to dry.

Notes:
