

### **Kinesiotape**

Kinesiotape is a thin, elastic, specially designed cotton tape used to treat painful injuries. It was first invented by Dr. Kenzo Kase in the 70's and gained popularity when Olympic athletes started using it in the mid 90's. Unlike traditional white tape used to stabilize a part of the body, kinesiotape is designed to stretch as you move allowing you to maintain your range of motion.

Originally, the tape was thought to increase the space between the skin and muscle by 'pulling' on the upper layer of the skin. This increased space would take pressure off of nerves, decrease pain, and improve lymphatic drainage. Recent studies have contested this theory. It's more likely that the tape works by taking advantage of the nervous systems sensory gating mechanism.

There is conflicting evidence about how to best to apply the tape. There are some practitioners that insist the tape must be applied in a specific stretch, in a specific pattern, or in a specific direction with regards to the muscle fibers. Other practitioners recommend just applying the tape along the injured muscle or directly over the point of pain. According to the research, both methods are equally effective.

The tape is typically prescribed for minor injuries such as non-complicated sprains, strains, and generalized muscle soreness.

### **Precautions**

- A small minority of patients may develop skin irritation because of the adhesive used in the tape. Discontinue use if itching or irritation occurs.
- Soap and water or rubbing alcohol can be used to clean your skin prior to taping.
- Use clippers to remove excess hair before application.
- Once on, rub the tape briskly from middle to end to activate the adhesive.
- Baths, showers, and swimming are ok. Just pat the tape dry with a towel and DO NOT blow dry.
- Do not apply heat over the tape.
- Pain relieving creams can be added to the tape for additional benefit.
- The tape typically stays on 3-5 days, but this can vary significantly based on skin type and brand of tape utilized.
- Remove the tape after 7 days. When removing the tape, don't rip it; gently peel the tape back while pushing the skin down. Baby or vegetable oil can be used to help remove the tape in a pinch.

If you have any concerns, discuss them with your health professional.