

Questions & Answers

Independently putting on and taking off compression socks

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Why am I no longer receiving help from a Community nurse for putting on and taking off my compression socks?

Many people are capable of putting on and taking off their compression socks themselves, possibly with a tool. This has advantages: you no longer have to wait for help and you can time it when you want to put on or take off your socks. This will give you more freedom and independence. On top of it, it also helps the Community Nurses. They can spend their precious time on people who truly need (medical) care. This way, we work together to ensure that care remains available for everyone, now and in the future. Of course, Community Nurses will help if, for medical or other reasons, you won't be able to put on or take off your compression socks yourself.

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How can I put on and take off my compression socks?

Gloves with extra grip and an anti-slip mat can help. You can purchase these yourself. The professional who measures the compression socks (the Compression Therapist*), will explain how you can put on and take off the compression socks. They will explain how you can do this with the help of a simple tool. It is a good idea to ask a relative or an acquaintance to be present during this explanation.

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What if independently putting on and taking off my compression socks doesn't work?

If you can't do it yourself after the explanation and practicing with a Compression Therapist, first see if someone in your community can help. If there is no one, you can ask an Occupational Therapist for support. An Occupational Therapist will check what is needed for you to do it yourself, or with the help of a caregiver. They can also practice with you for the first time. Various tools are available. The Occupational Therapist will apply for a suitable tool on your behalf.

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Which tool is suitable?

Which tool will work best for you, depends on a few factors. For example, how much strength you have in your hands, whether you can reach your toes, and how flexible you still are. Depending on your situation, a suitable tool can often be found. An Occupational Therapist can help you choose the right tool.



* * Sometimes the terms Bandagist or Fitter are also used for Compression Therapist.

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Where can I get the tools?

If you need a tool, you can get it through a Compression Therapist (simple tools) or an Occupational Therapist (more complex tools). If they apply for the tool on your behalf, it will usually be reimbursed by your health insurance. You can also choose to purchase a tool yourself, for example, through a home care store. Keep in mind you will pay for it yourself.

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Who will practice with me so I can use the tool myself?

You can practice with the tool yourself, or together with a family- or community member. Do you want to ask someone to temporarily help you? Then you can use the 'practice buddy card'. It clearly explains what is expected of your buddy. Your buddy temporarily helps you practice putting on and taking off the compression socks. Just until you can do it yourself.

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Who can I ask as a practice buddy?

Asking for help is sometimes difficult. Yet you will notice that many people are happy to help - especially if it's only temporary. For example, you can ask family members, friends, neighbors, someone from a club you are a member of, an old colleague, or children of good friends. Often, your community is bigger than you think.

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What is expected of a practice buddy?

Your practice buddy is present when you practice with the compression socks for the first time, together with the Occupational Therapist. They observe so that they know how to put them on and take them off. Afterwards, your practice buddy visits you daily to practice with you. Often you only need to practice once or twice. Sometimes you will need to practise a bit more often together. It usually doesn't take longer than two weeks.

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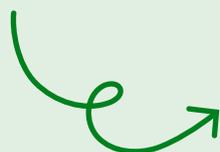
Do I need a referral?

To get compression socks, you will need a referral to a Compression Therapist who fits your socks. Usually, you will get this referral from your General Practitioner. Often, no referral is needed for an appointment with an Occupational Therapist, you can contact them directly. Your health insurance or Occupational Therapist can provide you with more information.

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Do I have to pay for the tool or the Occupational Therapist myself?

No, if you can put on and take off your compression socks independently with a tool, it will usually be reimbursed by your health insurance. The consultation by the Occupational Therapist is also reimbursed by the health insurance (up to a maximum of 10 hours per year). Both reimbursements are subject to a number of conditions. Your health insurance can tell you more.



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Who decides if I can get professional care if I can't put on and take off my compression socks independently?

The Community Nurse will look at your personal situation and will decide whether professional care is needed or not. The General Practitioner or Specialist does not decide, under no condition.

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Will I never receive professional care again for putting on and taking off compression socks?

Did you first try it yourself and after that together with an Occupational Therapist? And it still doesn't work, then a Community Nurse will look into how you can receive the best support.

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When should I replace my compression socks?

Your health insurance reimburses new compression socks once per year.

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Whom should I contact if I experience complaints while wearing my compression socks or have questions?

When you experience discomfort while wearing your compression socks, you can contact the professional who gave you a referral for wearing compression socks (in most cases this will be your General Practitioner). If you have complaints about the socks themselves, you can contact the Compression Therapist.

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I am currently being bandaged. Are compression socks still needed?

Bandaging is necessary to remove the fluid from your legs. When the fluid is gone from your legs, the compression socks are fitted. It is important to continue bandaging, because otherwise the fluid will increase again and your compression socks won't fit. Not everybody needs to be bandaged. Your doctor will make an assessment for you. It is important that you actually wear your compression socks. It is important for your general health and to prevent fluid returning to your legs.

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Do I have to wear my compression socks forever?

It's good to keep questioning if it's still necessary to wear your compression socks. Your health situation does not necessarily have to decrease as you get older. If you doubt the value of the compression socks, discuss this with your doctor.

