



Made to measure compression hosiery: why the right fit is so important



Compression therapy is used as a key part of the management of conditions that arise from disorders of the venous and or lymphatic systems.

Compression therapy works by helping to move blood and fluid from the tissues back into the veins where it is then returned to the heart. By easing congestion in the tissues, swelling is reduced and wounds are encouraged to heal.

There are many ways in which compression therapy can be delivered,

including multi-layer bandaging, wraps, or hosiery garments.

Hosiery is commonly used in the long-term management of chronic oedema and lymphoedema to prevent swelling once it has been reduced, or to maintain healing once a venous leg ulcer has healed. It is now common for leg ulcer hosiery kits to be used instead of bandaging as a recent trial showed they are as effective as bandaging to heal venous leg ulcers in some patients (Ashby et al, 2014).





Made to measure

However, for compression hosiery to work well, it must fit well. Ill-fitting hosiery may not deliver the right amount of compression. This can mean it simply won't help, or worse, can result in damage to your skin and underlying tissue. For example, a garment that is incorrectly measured may be too tight, resulting in pressure damage to the skin and restrict blood flow. Too loose and it will simply not apply enough compression to work, and could wrinkle or fall down.

To ensure a good fit, and to get the maximum benefit from your compression, it is important to consult a healthcare professional to decide on the best style and class of compression garment for you. This will influence what choices are available. For example, if you have varicose veins with no swelling, a circular knit garment made of a thinner fabric might be suitable, while lymphoedema that is resistant results in long-term persistent swelling to the limb that may need a stiffer flat-knit garment that can help to provide more resistance to the swelling and bridge any skin folds that are present.

Next, the size of the garment is selected following the manufacturer's guidelines (these may vary depending on the choice of garment). Usually, this involves taking several measurements from fixed points on the limb. The measurements will then

fit into a range of standard sizes, enabling the correct product to be selected, just like when you buy your clothes. For some people, however, the standard sizes of

compression hosiery will not fit. If your limb is long, short or has a circumference outside of stock sizes, you might have difficulty buying a compression garment 'off the shelf'.

Made to measure hosiery, as the name suggests, is made to your unique measurements ensuring a comfortable fit and that compression is delivered correctly.

This is where made to measure hosiery comes in. As the name suggests, made to measure hosiery is manufactured to fit according to the wearer's unique measurements. This ensures that the garment fits, is comfortable and delivers the right amount of compression to the limb.

As with selecting and measuring for standard compression garments, different manufacturers will require different measurements to produce a unique tailored garment. So as with off the shelf hosiery, measurements must be taken according to the manufacturer's guidelines.

Once ordered, made to measure garments are manufactured for you, and are usually delivered within the week; not too long to wait for the perfect fit.

Ashby RL, Gabe R, Ali S, et al (2014) Clinical and cost-effectiveness of compression hosiery versus compression bandages in treatment of venous leg ulcers (Venous leg Ulcer Study IV, VenUS IV): a randomised controlled trial. *Lancet*. 2014 Mar 8; 383(9920):871-9. Epub 2013 Dec 6.



Made to measure



Product name: Credalast Velvet/Classic
Manufacturer: Credenhill



- Credalast circular-knit, made to measure garments use state of the art knitting technology for a seamless finish
- Two ranges for the management of lower limb venous conditions not associated with long-term swelling (oedema)
- Credalast Velvet stockings are produced with Tactel® Climate Effect technology means the garment is breathable and wicks away moisture to maintain optimum skin balance
- The Tactel® microfibres also offer outstanding comfort and softness
- Classic range offer greater stiffness and traditional stocking style.

Product name: Sigvaris range
Manufacturer: Sigvaris



- Four ranges of made to measure compression stockings:
- *Comfort*: A unisex stocking available in 6 colours
- *Cotton*: 100% cotton garment, ideal for all seasons and sensitive skin.
- *Magic*: Sheer and elegant stockings in six colours. Soft and comfortable to wear

- *Traditional 500*: A stocking offering an alternative to flat-knit garments. Effective for severe oedema. Contains natural rubber and is robust yet comfortable.



Product name: ActiLymph MTM Ease/Dura
Manufacturer: L&R

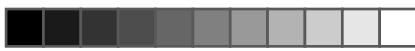


- ActiLymph custom-made compression stockings are flat knit for the management of chronic oedema and lymphoedema
 - Stockings are made with a soft fabric which enables easy application and comfort during wear, while still delivering effective compression
- Ease range is ideal for most types of chronic oedema and lymphoedema
- Dura range of garments are available for people with resistant chronic lymphoedema who need a stiffer garment to reduce limb volume
- Available in sand and black.

Product name: JOBST Elvarex
Manufacturer: BSN Medical



- Flat-knit custom-made compression garment for the management of lymphoedema
- Air permeable and breathable fabric makes the garment pleasant to wear.
- Fabric means that the garment lies flat over skinfolds
- Fabric micro-massages the skin during wear, which is beneficial for stimulating the fine lymph vessels below the skin's surface.
- Wide choice of compression classes, ensuring your garment delivers the right pressure for you
- Available in a range of colours.



Get the best from your compression garment

1 Not the right fit?

Don't be tempted to tamper! Folding over, cutting, or adapting your garment in any way may mean it won't work effectively. For example, folding the fabric will result in almost twice as much compression in the overlapping area, which could result in damage to your skin. If a different size or make of standard garment still doesn't fit, made to measure may be a solution.

2 Wash regularly

Cleaning your garment as recommended by the manufacturer can help it to maintain its elasticity and removes the dirt accumulated during wear. Many manufacturers recommend placing the garment into a mesh wash bag or cotton pillow case to protect the fabric during machine washing.

3 Dry

Air or machine dry your garment as recommended by the manufacturer. Keep heat low, especially if your garment has silicone components. Avoid direct sunlight as this can damage the elastic fibres of your garment. If air drying, lying the

TOP TIP

A helping hand

If you have difficulty applying or removing your compression garment, consider using an application aid. These are designed to help your garment slide more easily on and off the limb (see p.30 for more details).

garment flat is best to avoid it being stretched as the water drains when hanging.

4 Wear one, wash one

Once you have found your ideal garment, it is best to have two; one that can be worn while the other is washed and dried. This will help to prolong the elasticity of both items.

4 Beware of moisturiser

Although moisturising is a key component of your skin care routine, beware of its effects on your garment's elastic fibres. Use a water-based emollient and ensure it is absorbed before your garment is applied.

5 Replace

Replace your garment every six months, or sooner if it is showing signs of losing its effectiveness, such as a loss of elasticity, feeling looser than usual or if it is damaged in any way with fraying or holes.

Find more information on application aids and caring for your garment by visiting www.daylong.co.uk