

# Scoliosis Brace Wear & Care Guide

 Hanger Clinic®



pediatric  
SPECIALISTS

Your **Scoliosis Thoracic Lumbar Sacral Orthosis (TLSO)**, or scoliosis brace, has been designed to apply pressure over your back in specific areas to straighten your spine while you are wearing the brace.

These instructions will define a wearing schedule, how to care for your skin, and provide a treatment plan including an appointment follow-up schedule. If you have any specific questions about your care plan, please contact your orthotist.

## WHAT TO EXPECT

The primary goal of your scoliosis brace is to stop the progression of the curve. For example, if you start with a 27-degree curve, the goal is to prevent progression of the 27-degree curve over the course of treatment.

Treatment will require appointments with both your spine doctor/orthopedic surgeon and your Hanger Clinic orthotist (who will be responsible for your brace treatment). You will likely have additional and more frequent visits with your orthotist to make necessary adjustments to your brace.

Regular follow-up appointments with your orthotist are important to assess the fit and function of your brace. Your spine doctor will determine treatment time in the brace, which is routinely defined until skeletal maturity.



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## PUTTING ON YOUR BRACE

Your orthotist will ensure an appropriate fit and confirm that you feel comfortable and confident putting on and removing your brace. Initially, it may be easier to have someone help you put on your brace, but below are some general guidelines.

To start, put on a clean, dry, cotton tank top or snug shirt. Smooth out all the wrinkles and pull the shirt down past your hips. See suggestions below for body socks and shirts to wear underneath, and discuss these options with your orthotist.

### If your brace opens in the back:

1. Hold the brace in front of you. Spread the brace open, and apply it around your hips and torso.
2. Move the brace up or down until it settles onto the waist/soft spot between hips and ribs.
3. From the back, center the brace. Your bottom should be centered in the opening.
4. When tightening the straps, your orthotist will confirm the order in which to tighten the brace, such as bottom, middle, top or middle, bottom, top. Thread each strap through the opening of the metal loop and secure the Velcro back onto itself. Tension lines will be established by your orthotist for the required tightness. It may take 2-3 times per strap before you reach the recommended tension of each strap. Wear the orthosis to the lines marked on your straps. A loose orthosis may move and rub, causing skin irritations.
5. The width of the opening should be centered and equal from top to bottom.



*\*Your brace will be worn under your clothing (photo purposes only)*

### If your brace opens in the front:

1. Hold the brace in front of you. Spread the brace open, and apply it around your hips and torso.
2. Move the brace up or down until it settles onto the waist/soft spot between hips and ribs.
3. It is recommended to lay on your back and tighten the straps. This allows for the recommended elongation of the spine while in the brace for optimal curve correction and alignment.
4. When tightening the straps, your orthotist will confirm the order in which to tighten the brace, such as bottom, middle, top or middle, bottom, top. Thread each strap through the opening of the metal loop and secure the Velcro back onto itself. Tension lines will be established by your orthotist for the required tightness. It may take 2-3 times per strap before you reach the recommended tension of each strap. Wear the orthosis to the lines marked on your straps. A loose orthosis may move and rub, causing skin irritations.

## WEARING INSTRUCTIONS

We encourage you to participate in all of your normal activities, including exercise, athletics, PE class, and swimming. It is recommended to remove the brace for all athletics, PE class, swimming, and bathing activities. When your brace is off at school, it should be stored somewhere locked or monitored, such as a gym teacher's office, athletic locker, or nurse's office to prevent it from being lost, stolen, or damaged.

You may require assistance from the school nurse or gym teacher to get the brace back on and to the recommended lines on the straps. If your school requires a note, please notify your orthotist.

## CLOTHING

- The brace will be worn under your clothing. Loose-fitting shirts, pants, and skirts with elastic waists are most comfortable to wear over your brace. Clothing with a button and zipper may require an increase of 1-2 sizes. Choose the style of clothing that makes you feel most comfortable.
- Wear a clean, dry cotton tank top or shirt under the brace to protect your skin. Tank tops with the flap for protection under the arms are recommended for daytime use. Ask your orthotist for details.
- Undergarments can be worn under or over the brace. If undergarments are worn over the brace, it may make it easier to go to the restroom without removing the brace. Practice going to the restroom multiple times at home before wearing your brace to school.
- Bras can be worn under the brace, but underwire bras are not recommended.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Wearing the scoliosis brace for gym, exercise, and sports is not recommended, at least for the first two months as you get used to the fit of the brace. There may be limitations in your movement.
- If participating in choir or instruments requiring deep breaths, loosen straps for these activities or remove if necessary.
- When eating smaller meals, loosen the straps and leave them loose for 30 minutes following your meal (if needed). For larger meals, you may remove the brace and leave it off for 30-45 minutes after the meal to let your food digest. The brace may remain on for snacks.
- You may have to accommodate for your body changing over time. For example, as you get taller sometimes a person will get thinner and need to make the brace tighter to prevent migration. As you feel comfortable, tighten the straps.
- Do not submerge the brace in water as moisture will become trapped inside and may cause the brace to smell.
- Never leave your brace in a car when the outside temperature is 90 degrees or greater as your brace can deform in a hot car.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR BODY SOCKS OR SHIRTS TO WEAR UNDERNEATH\*

**Recommended Size:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Recommended Style:** \_\_\_\_\_

- Knit-Rite – [KnitRiteDirect.com](http://KnitRiteDirect.com)
- Embraced in Comfort – [EmbracedInComfort.com](http://EmbracedInComfort.com)
- Kohl's SO® Camisoles
- Jockey® Camisoles
- Nike Dry Fit Tanks or Tees
- Brace Buddies – Shirts for under & over the brace
- 32 Degrees Cool – Dry-fit t-shirts
- Wonder Tee & Essential Tee – [DownEastBasics.com](http://DownEastBasics.com)

*\*This is not a complete list of resources, nor an official endorsement from Hanger Clinic.*

## WEARING SCHEDULE

At first, your scoliosis brace may feel uncomfortable. It may feel like it is difficult to take a deep breath, and you may feel the pressures of the brace. It is recommended you gradually increase the number of hours per day the brace is worn. In general, we suggest you increase use over the course of 2 weeks, with the goal to be in the prescribed wearing schedule by the third week. Suggested guidelines for gradual adjustment are provided in this chart to the right.

Wearing schedules are determined by your spine doctor and orthotist keeping in mind the following factors: your scoliosis curve, risk of progression, skeletal maturity, and activity schedule. This schedule can be modified to reflect your recommended treatment goal established by your spine doctor. For example, your set goal may be to wear your brace 12-16 hours per day vs 20 hours. Confirm your treatment goal with your orthotist.

## BEDTIME WEAR

It is common to feel some slight discomfort due to the pressures applied within the brace. You can try sleeping on your side, back, or stomach. If you are unable to fall asleep after a long period, take the brace off and try again the next night. Once you can fall asleep with your brace on, you may wake up in the middle of the night. If this is the case and you do not typically wake up, remove the orthosis and continue to get a full night's sleep. Over time, your body will adjust to the new feelings of wearing a brace and you should be able to sleep normally.

## SKIN CARE

Each time the brace is removed, look over your skin closely. Look for red marks that do not go away within 45-60 minutes. When pressed, pressure marks should turn a lighter shade and pressure marks should fade within 45-60 minutes. Discolored areas under the corrective pads may not fade, and this is normal.

If you notice darkened areas, redness, or skin abrasions, especially over boney areas, that do not turn lighter and do not disappear within 45-60 minutes or are uncomfortable, contact your orthotist to discuss if an adjustment is required.

Plan to bathe daily, either in the morning or evening. Keep the skin under the brace clean by wiping it down with baby wipes or a clean damp wash cloth 2 times each day. Good times to consider are in the morning, after school, and/or before bed.

Avoid putting any type of lotion or powder on the skin before wearing the brace. These soften the skin and may allow skin breakdown to occur. You may apply lotion or powder when the brace is off, but confirm the skin is clean and any excess lotion or powder is removed 45 minutes before wearing the brace again.

DAY	WEAR TIME
1	2 hours on at home <b>TOTAL HOURS: 2</b>
2	2 hours on 30 min off 2 hours on <b>TOTAL HOURS: 4</b>
3	2 hours on 30 min off 2-4 hours on <b>TOTAL HOURS: 4-6</b>
4 & 5	2 hours on Off until bedtime Sleep in it 8 hours <b>TOTAL HOURS: 10</b> (varies)*
6 & 7	4 hours on Off until bedtime Sleep in it 8 hours <b>TOTAL HOURS: 12</b>
8 & 9	First day to wear brace to school 6 hours on Off until bedtime Sleep in it 8 hours <b>TOTAL HOURS: 12</b>
10 & 11	Wear brace to school 8 hours on Off until bedtime Sleep in it 8 hours <b>TOTAL HOURS: 16</b>
12 & 13	Wear brace to school 20 hours on Off for 4 hours, at a time of your choosing <b>TOTAL HOURS: 20</b>

*\* You may not achieve the full 8 hours the first 2 nights. You may remove the brace in the middle of the night if necessary.*

## CLEANING INSTRUCTIONS

Shirts worn under the brace will absorb most of the sweat, but perspiration can collect on the foam liner over time. Make it part of your weekly routine to use a 70% isopropyl rubbing alcohol to clean the inside of the brace. Spray bottles with rubbing alcohol and washcloths work great to clean the brace quickly. Harsh cleaners, such as bleach wipes, are not recommended. Both you and the brace should be dry before putting it on.

## APPOINTMENT SCHEDULE

After the delivery of your scoliosis brace, your orthotist will set a schedule to review your progress over the coming weeks and months. Here is an example of what your journey may look like:

APPOINTMENT	ACTIVITY
<b>2-10 Week Follow-Up &amp; X-Ray Check</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review in-brace X-ray, make any necessary adjustments</li><li>• Review hours of wear in the brace</li><li>• Physical therapy compliance</li></ul>
<b>Regular Follow-Ups</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In-brace and out-of-brace X-rays will be scheduled every 6 months with your spine doctor to monitor the scoliosis curve for continued evaluation</li><li>• Follow-up visits at Hanger Clinic will occur every 3 to 4 months to adjust for growth, possibly provide a compliance monitor report, and assess the brace fit</li></ul>

## TREATMENT COMPLIANCE

Scoliosis treatment success is dependent upon compliance. Compliance monitors are often placed inside the brace for objective feedback. The monitor collects data via incremental temperature readings. Monitor reports may be provided at each follow up visit. The feedback from this report will be discussed by the patient wearing the brace, your family, and your orthotist.

As you go through this journey, remember you are not alone. Scoliosis treatment is a marathon NOT a sprint. It will require your commitment and tenacity for success. Your Hanger Clinic orthotist is available to answer your questions and support you in any way they can. If we do not hear from you, we will assume you are wearing your brace every day without issue. Do not go days, weeks, or months without wearing your brace. We are here to help. Do not hesitate to call us.



*\*Your brace will be worn under your clothing (photo purposes only)*

Your next appointment is on: \_\_\_\_\_

 Visit [HangerClinic.com/Scoliosis](https://www.hangerclinic.com/scoliosis) to learn more.



**WATCH THE  
INSTRUCTIONAL  
VIDEO**