

FENWAY  HEALTH

TUCKING

A resource guide on how to tuck safely,
where to find affirming products, and
answers to frequently asked questions

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Tucking FAQ

A note about the language used in this document:

This guide discusses genital body parts using anatomical terms. We recognize that these terms may not reflect the words you use, and we honor any words that you use to talk about your own body.

What is Tucking?

Tucking is a technique used to hide the appearance of a bulge in the crotch area by positioning genitals in a particular way. Generally, this means that the testes are tucked up into spaces in the pelvis called the inguinal canals, and the shaft of the penis is pulled up and towards the back of the body in between the legs. The penis and testes are then secured in this position using a variety of methods such as underwear, tape, or a gaff. Genital tucking can alleviate dysphoria and create the appearance of a flat or smooth crotch.

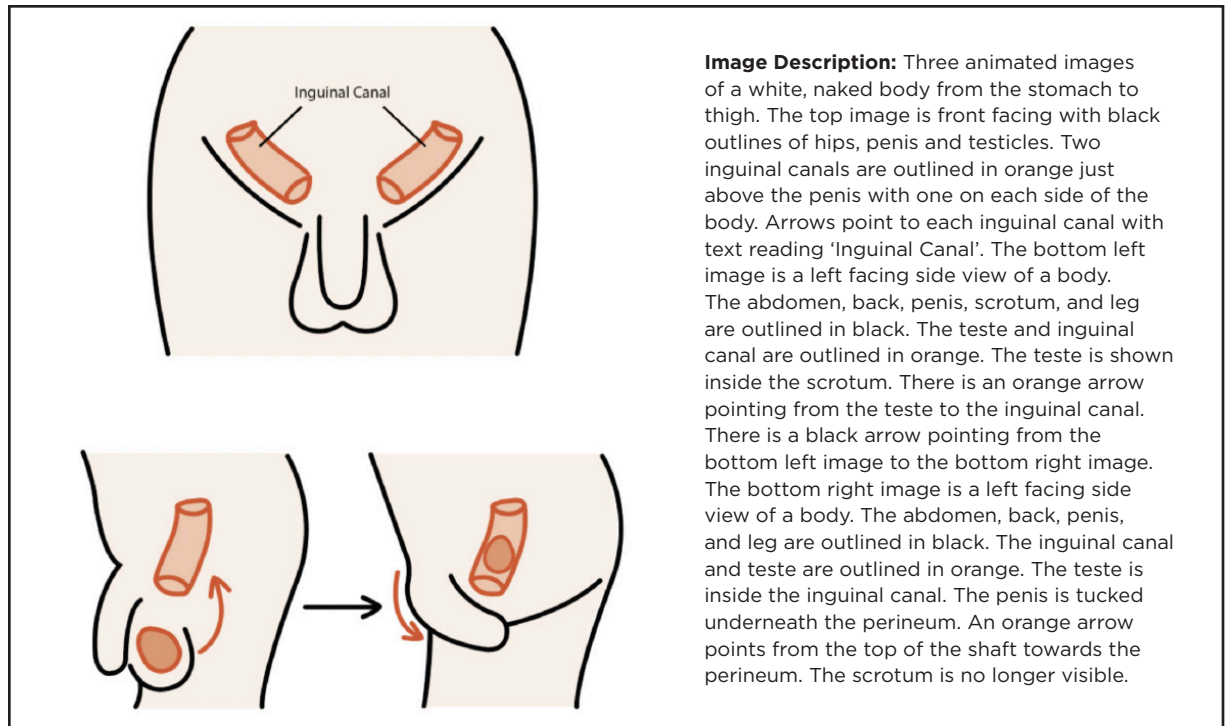


Image Description: Three animated images of a white, naked body from the stomach to thigh. The top image is front facing with black outlines of hips, penis and testicles. Two inguinal canals are outlined in orange just above the penis with one on each side of the body. Arrows point to each inguinal canal with text reading 'Inguinal Canal'. The bottom left image is a left facing side view of a body. The abdomen, back, penis, scrotum, and leg are outlined in black. The teste and inguinal canal are outlined in orange. The teste is shown inside the scrotum. There is an orange arrow pointing from the teste to the inguinal canal. There is a black arrow pointing from the bottom left image to the bottom right image. The bottom right image is a left facing side view of a body. The abdomen, back, penis, and leg are outlined in black. The inguinal canal and teste are outlined in orange. The teste is inside the inguinal canal. The penis is tucked underneath the perineum. An orange arrow points from the top of the shaft towards the perineum. The scrotum is no longer visible.

Tucking FAQ continued

How can I tuck?

There are a few different tucking methods that include wearing underwear, tape, or gaffs. One of the most accessible methods is wearing tight-fitting underwear or shapewear like Spanx. While wearing any pair of tight-fitting underwear may work for some people, shapewear may work better for others. Shapewear is a tight-fitting undergarment that is intended to control the shape of one's figure and can be helpful for concealing the appearance of a bulge.

A gaff is a type of compression underwear designed to create a flat front area. The compression material can be helpful for holding a tuck in place for longer periods of time, and often the fabric used minimizes the silhouette appearance that some folks have. Gaffs are specifically made with tucking in mind, and so they are a reliable choice for many people. Gaffs can also be worn without tucking to minimize the appearance of a bulge.

Some folks also use medical grade tape to hold a tuck in place.

Do I need to have dysphoria to tuck?

Dysphoria is not a requirement to tuck. Tucking is intended for anyone and everyone who would like the feeling and appearance of a flatter crotch. If you intend on having a gender affirming surgery covered by insurance in the future, your insurance company may require a documented diagnosis of gender dysphoria to go ahead with coverage. Talk to your medical provider or behavioral health provider if you have questions about this diagnosis.

What can I do if I have pain from tucking?

The best thing you can do to alleviate pain and soreness from tucking is to give your body breaks for as long as you are able to. For some folks this means not tucking for a few days. For other folks this means only tucking for as long as you are in public. Others still may only be able to take a quick break from tucking while on a lunch break or in the bathroom. The important thing is to listen to your body and take a break when you can.

Tucking FAQ continued

Steps for tucking adapted from Sock Drawer Heroes and Unclockable

1. Gather your tucking supplies. This may be a pair of tucking underwear, gaff, tape or both. If using tucking underwear, put these on and pull them up to your knees. Some people cover the tip of the penis with gauze, cloth, or tissue to prevent germs from the anus entering the urethra. Some folks apply antifungal cream or powder to the area as a further preventative of infections and odor.
2. If using tape, we recommend shaving or trimming the area first to prevent the tape from ripping or pulling hair. Tape should only be applied to freshly cleaned towel-dried skin that is free of lotions and oils. It's also a good idea to pre-cut the strips of tape to the desired length before you begin. It will likely take you several tries to figure out how many pieces of tape you need and what lengths they should be. You should start with 2-3 pieces of tape that extend from your lower abdomen, about where your underwear sits on your body, over the shaft of the penis and up your buttocks to your tailbone. You may also want to use a couple of pieces that extend from the shaft of the penis, underneath your left or right buttock and over to your left or right hip respectively.
3. Use two or three fingers to tuck each testicle up into each corresponding inguinal canal. This should not be painful. If you feel pain, stop and try again later. Some people choose not to tuck the testicles up into the inguinal canal. If you prefer, you can position the testicles back and to the sides, just make sure your gaff is wide enough so there's no side spillage.
4. Next pull the penis and scrotum backwards between the legs. This should help keep the testicles tucked up if using this method.
5. Put on your underwear to keep everything in place. Underwear designed specifically for tucking can better provide flatness as they tend to have a stiff front panel to keep everything secure. If using tape, place your pre-cut pieces of tape.

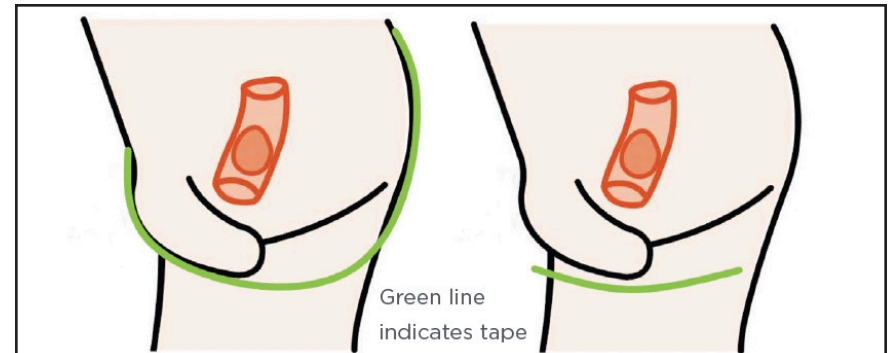


Image Description: Two images side by side of a left facing side view of a white, naked body from the stomach to thigh. The abdomen, back, penis, and leg are outlined in black. The inguinal canal and teste are outlined in orange. The teste is inside the inguinal canal. The penis is tucked underneath the perineum. The left image has a green line from the lower abdomen, over the shaft of the penis, across the perineum, up the buttocks and ending at the tailbone. The right image has a green line from the shaft of the penis, across the perineum, and ending at the buttocks.

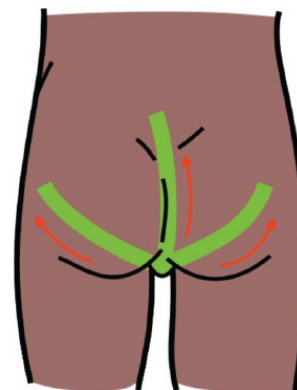


Image Description: An animated image of the backside of a brown body. The lower back, buttocks, scrotum, and thighs are visible. There are three green lines and an orange arrow next to each green line. One green line starts at the scrotum and extends over the left buttock, ending at the top left edge of the left buttock. Another green line starts at the scrotum and goes up the center of the buttocks and ends at the top of the buttocks. The third green line starts at the scrotum and extends over the right buttock, ending at the top right edge of the right buttock. The respective orange arrows trace each green line to indicate the direction that tape should be applied.

Tucking FAQ continued

Which method of tucking is better?

There is no one method that is better than another, and methods are based on personal preference.

Is tucking safe?

Tucking can be a safe and effective way to affirm your gender when it is done carefully and responsibly. Some studies suggest that heat stress of the testes can impact fertility, and tucking may increase the temperature of the testes. In a case study, stopping tucking may have allowed for the return sperm production <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8058914/>. You should talk to your doctor if you have any concerns about tucking.

Some tips for safe tucking:

- Stop immediately if you feel any pain
- Some discomfort is normal, especially if you aren't used to tucking
- Use the bathroom when you need to go
- If you use tape, make sure the tape you use is medical grade. No duct tape, scotch tape, or packing tape.
- Take breaks from tucking to give your body a break
- Don't sleep while tucked
- Start slowly and tuck gently
- Don't wear underwear or gaffs that are too tight
- The most common side effects of tucking are itching, rash, testicular pain, penile pain, skin infections, and urinary tract infections (UTIs)
- Be sure to talk to your doctor about fertility if you plan to have children using your own sperm

Is it possible to use the bathroom while tucking?

You will need to remove your gaff, underwear, or tape and untuck so that you can use the bathroom. Once you are done, you can retuck. Most tapes can handle 2 or 3 uses.

Do I have to shave to tuck?

Not necessarily. You may want to trim or shave if you are using tape to tuck to avoid the adhesive pulling at the hair. Trimming or shaving the area may also help create a smoother look and feel, but it is totally your preference.

Do I have to identify a certain way to tuck?

Tucking is for anyone with these body parts who wants to create the feeling and appearance of not having a bulge. You may see tucking described for women, trans women, transfeminine, transfemme, or non-binary folks, but you do not need to identify with any of these terms to tuck.

Do I need to have surgery if I have bottom dysphoria?

Surgery is not for everyone, and that's okay! Many folks who tuck have no intention of getting surgery. Some people feel affirmed by tucking alone, while others may need surgery to alleviate their dysphoria. The decision whether to have surgery is very personal, and everyone's journey is different. Tucking is a great place to start if you are unsure if you want to have genital surgery in the future.

Low and No-Cost Tucking Programs

Point of Pride Free Femme Shapewear Program

<https://www.pointofpride.org/free-femme-shapewear>

Étaín Q.U.A.D. for folks in Maine

<https://www.etainunderthings.com/community-programs/quad/>

The Tumblr Transgender Clothing Exchange

<https://transclothesexchange.tumblr.com/>

Signs that it's time to take a break

- discomfort
- skin irritation
- dehydration
- soreness
- tightness
- urinary pain
- testicular pain
- penile pain
- overheating

Be sure to

- Stop immediately if you feel any pain. Some discomfort is normal, especially if you aren't used to tucking
- Use the bathroom when you need to go!
- Stay hydrated. Don't withhold water to avoid having to pee
- Make sure the tape you use is medical grade. No duct tape, scotch tape, or packing tape.
- Take breaks from tucking every 8-12 hours
- Don't sleep while tucked
- Start slowly and tuck gently
- Wash gaffs and underwear regularly

Tips

- Try layering underwear to keep your tuck in place
- Wearing baggy pants, flowy skirts or dresses may hide the appearance of a bulge and you may not need to tuck
- Get comfortable tucking at home before trying it outside
- Always go by the size charts and recommendations from the brands you buy from

Gaffs and Tucking Tape

The following information is for your reference and consideration in purchasing gear.

TUCKING TAPE

Unclockable

<https://unlockable.com/>

Sock Drawer Heroes

<https://sockdrawerheroes.com/>

GAFFS

LeoLines <https://www.etsy.com/shop/LeoLines>

TomboyX Tucking Underwear <https://tomboyx.com/collections/gender-euphoria>

Fit4USolutions - Kids and Adult Sizes <https://fit4usolutions.com/>

Sock Drawer Heroes - Kids and Adult Sizes <https://sockdrawerheroes.com/>

Tuck Buddies - Kids and Adult Sizes <https://www.tuckbuddies.com/>

Origami Customs <https://origamicustoms.com/>

Carmen Liu Lingerie <https://www.carmenliulingerie.co.uk/>

Enby <https://shopenby.com/>

Urbody <https://urbody.co/collections/bottoms>

Studies on the health effects of tucking

Mannat Malik, Erin E. Cooney, Jean-Michel Brevelle, and Tonia Poteat. Tucking Practices and Attributed Health Effects in Transfeminine Individuals. *Transgender Health*. Ahead of print <http://doi.org/10.1089/trgh.2022.0064>

Poteat, T., Malik, M., & Cooney, E. (2018). 2148 Understanding the health effects of binding and tucking for gender affirmation. *Journal of Clinical and Translational Science*, 2(S1), 76-76. doi:10.1017/cts.2018.268

Iris de Nie, Joyce Asseler, Andreas Meißner, Ilona A.C. Voorn-de Warem, E. Hanna Kostelijk, Martin den Heijer, Judith Huirne, Norah M. van Mello, A cohort study on factors impairing semen quality in transgender women, *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology*, Volume 226, Issue 3, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajog.2021.10.020>.



Fenway Health is a nationally recognized leader in gender affirming care. We conduct research and provide direct care, education, and advocacy. Please consider supporting Fenway's Gender Affirming Care efforts.