

What is Kinesiology Tape and How Can it Help Me?

By Katherine Clark, D.C., Palmer Chiropractic Clinics

I've had lots of questions about the "magic tape" that my patients have seen on Olympians, local high school athletes, their neighbor's back and Grandma's knees. I, too, was critical when introduced to this kinesiology tape. I thought it was a fashion statement for athletes in crazy colors and designs like a temporary tribal tattoo. When I learned about the potential benefits of this tape, I decided to get trained in using it and to try the tape in a few case studies.

I typically use a type of kinesiology tape called Rocktape, which I like because it seems to stick very well even for swimmers and those with oily skin. I love having the kinesiology tape as a tool to use to help patients heal. The Rocktape.com website states that the tape "reduces muscle fatigue" and "promotes blood flow for faster recovery." The tape is used to help with proper biomechanical motion and can stimulate or inhibit muscles that are imbalanced. Depending on how the tape is applied, kinesiology tape can act as "compression or decompression and relieve pain and swelling."

After researching it and using it on my patients, I found it to be very beneficial. It turns out that not only was I seeing results, people were coming back and asking for more of the "magic tape." Adjustments that hadn't held before were finally holding. Patients with knee pain exacerbated during long walks due to instability were now able to walk the whole mall with little to no pain. The tape also helped with lymph drainage as I saw when the bruises from a sprained ankle I taped diminished compared to the areas where I had not applied the tape. Pregnant women with unstable low back joints were raving about the tape. I couldn't deny that patients were seeing results and improving in their activities of daily living faster with a combination of adjustments and tape.

Who can benefit from tape? The truth is, if it can be adjusted, it can be taped. If it hurts, it probably can be taped. If it's a new sprain or chronic injury, it can be taped. The tape is latex-free and the adhesive is hypo-allergenic. Most people can wear the tape with no problem.

What conditions can be treated with tape? Lower back pain, plantar fasciitis, shoulder impingement, postural imbalances, ankle and wrist sprains, IT band tendonitis, patellar (knee cap) tracking, upper back posture, tennis elbow and uncomfortable pregnancy tummies are all conditions I've successfully treated in our clinics with adjustments and taping.

How long does the tape last? The tape holds for three to five days depending on the patient's skin. You're able to shower, swim and resume activities as normal with the tape in place. It doesn't restrict movement, so most people forget they're wearing it.

Where can I get taped? Many chiropractors are trained in the application of kinesiology tape. You can call us at the Palmer outpatient clinics in Davenport at (563) 884-5801, or in Moline at (309) 764-4901, to schedule a consultation with a Doctor of Chiropractic who specializes in taping. Other health care professionals, such as physical therapists, physical trainers or sports therapists may also be trained in the application of kinesiology tape.