

Using Your Gel Wrap at Home

Frequently Asked Questions/Concerns

How often, and for how long, should I use my gel wrap?

We recommend wearing your gel wrap as much as possible initially, and switching your gel bags every 4 hours. Bags should remain in the freezer for 4 hours to freeze completely. As your joint replacement heals and you are feeling less pain, you may reduce your use.

The gel bags come out of the freezer in a funny shape and won't fit in the wrap.

It is best to lay your gel bags as flat as possible when you return them to the freezer. This way they will freeze flat and hold their shape.

The frozen gel bags are too hard. I can't make them fit my body.

Give your hard gels a few minutes to sit out and they will quickly become easy to bend.

My knee/hip wrap slips down my leg and won't stay in place.

Your wrap is made with a very high-quality compression bandage material. Simply wrap the straps tighter to hold in place. And remember -- the greater compression is good for "holding in" the cold, and also for control of swelling.

My gel wrap is too cold for me. What should I do?

Everyone has their own sensitivity to cold. For many patients, wearing the gel wrap over regular clothing is comfortable. If you find this too cold or uncomfortable, put a washcloth or small towel under the wrap. Add extra layers as needed. You will find your own comfort level, where the cold helps you without being too cold.

Can I wash my wrap?

You can either hand-wash or machine-wash your wrap, but don't run it through the dryer! The heat isn't good for the elastic straps, and the Velcro will act as a lint magnet. Air-drying overnight is best.

Can I use my wrap if I am not icing?

Yes. Many patients find that applying the wrap without the gel bags adds comfort and supports. This is especially true for the knee wrap.

What do I do with my gel wrap when I no longer need it for my medical condition?

Keep it handy for those times after you are healed, when occasional flare-ups or soreness might occur. The product will last many months or years.

What about heat therapy?

Your gel wrap can also be used for heat. Do not apply heat to your surgical site unless your doctor allows you to do so. Heat the gel bag in the microwave at full power for one minute. Add heat in 30-second intervals until the gel bag is warm to the touch. Use caution so as not to overheat and cause burns! Carefully place the heated gel bag into the wrap and apply.

For more information, call the Jim Craigie Center for Joint Replacement at 609.853.7970