

## Compression Garments

Compression garments can be extremely helpful for patients with orthostatic intolerance. Our patients usually benefit the most from lower body compression including legs and abdomen. The compression in this area helps to move blood back up to the heart and brain. Lots of our patients find that they can function much better when wearing compression.

When you think of compression garments, you probably think of an elderly person, or the compression socks they put on you when you have surgery. While those types of compression do work well, they are not very stylish. Modern-day compression garments can be found in much more of an everyday style. Between leggings, tights, stockings, and patterned socks, there's bound to be at least one style that you'll like.

We typically recommend that when you first start with compression, you start with **20-30mmHg**. These provide a firm enough level of compression without being too difficult to put on. If you feel like 20-30mmHg is too firm or too difficult to put on, there is also 15-20mmHg. If you feel like 20-30mmHg is not enough compression, you can move up to 30-40mmHg. We like the compression that comes with 30-40mmHg, but they can be difficult to put on, especially for our patients with joint hypermobility.

Compression garments can be purchased online now from different companies, and even on Amazon. The cost can vary anywhere from around \$15 to \$180. The ones at a higher price point will usually last longer, but you don't necessarily need to break the bank to have effective compression. The garments at a lower price point will work well, they just will probably not have the longest lifespan. Before you purchase online for full price, you might want to check with your insurance company to see if they cover the cost of compression garments with a prescription from your doctor. If your insurance covers them, you might only be able to get them from certain medical supply stores or companies. The insurance company should disclose to you if they only cover the cost of compression garments from specific companies. They might not be as fashionable as some of the other ones online, but they work just the same. Make sure you buy the correct size for yourself to get the full effect of the compression. Online stores usually have a size chart you can go off of. You can even get fitted for compression stockings at some medical supply stores to ensure a perfect fit.

There are different types of compression garments based on individual compression needs. For orthostatic intolerance, we usually recommend full lower-body compression. This includes the abdomen and legs. For abdominal compression, we recommend firm shapewear like Spanx. We also recommend compression shirts and vests for those who do not wish to wear shapewear. For leg compression, we usually recommend waist-high stockings or leggings. You also have the option of thigh-high stockings or socks. If you feel you do not need compression in your thigh area, knee-high socks and stockings are also available. Our patients generally see the best results when wearing the shapewear or compression vest in addition to waist-high compression. This will help to prevent the severity of symptoms that are brought on by being upright by reducing the blood pooling down to the legs and abdomen.

Remember, there are purchasing options online and in person at certain specialty pharmacies and medical supply stores. Find out which purchasing option is best for you!

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