

# Taping and Bracing

After a significant ankle sprain, the ligament will be stretched and heal with scar tissue. Therefore, it is no longer as effective at protecting the ankle from extremes of movement that cause injury. Wearing a brace or tape will help prevent the ankle from moving into such extremes of movement.

## Q and A

- **Is taping or bracing better?**
  - » Studies support both! There is no conclusive evidence to prove that one is better than the other. It comes down to personal preference. To help determine what is best, talk to a Physiotherapist.
- **Will taping and bracing weaken my ankles?**
  - » When applied or fitted correctly, normal ankle movement still occurs, and muscle activity continues. Taping and bracing therefore will not weaken ankle muscles. Keep doing plenty of strengthening, balance, landing exercises and the NetballSmart Dynamic Warm Up to make those ankles strong.
- **Should I brace or tape if I haven't sprained my ankle before?**
  - » There is no need to tape or brace if the ankle has not been sprained before. Do the NetballSmart Dynamic Warm Up, practice your loading, and a few exercises to challenge the ankle; brush your teeth/hair/put in your earrings standing on one leg.

## Choosing a Brace

**There are lots of braces out there. How to choose an ankle brace?**

- Look for the following 3 features:
  - 1) A lacing system
  - 2) Rigid or semi rigid stays (supportive strips) on both sides of the ankle.
  - 3) A Velcro and/or elasticised strapping system over the top.
- Avoid basic neoprene sleeves and elasticised supports. These will not be effective in providing stability to the ankle.
- If a brace blocks or restricts the ankles bend (dorsiflexion) too much during landing, it may limit the ability to bend knees fully. This may increase the risk of knee injury. Therefore, be aware that an overly restrictive brace can also be a problem.



## Comparison of Tape vs Brace

	Tape	Brace
<b>Cost</b>	\$10-15 per roll of rigid tape. One roll lasts 3-4 tapings. Could add up to > \$300 a year.	\$75 - \$100. A brace lasts a season or 12 months approximately.
<b>Fit</b>	Customised to your ankle with no slide.	Not as snug as tape but if fitted well is customised to your ankle. Possible small degree of movement within the brace. Can feel bulky within the shoe.
<b>Speed of application</b>	Takes at least 10-minutes to apply.	1-2 minutes to fit.
<b>Skin irritation</b>	Skin can become irritated by the tape glue. Removal of the tape can remove the top layer of skin. A rash may develop.	Minimal irritation unless rubbing occurs due to a poorly fitted brace. Can be minimised by ensuring correct size and fit.
<b>Accuracy</b>	Room for error if not applied correctly.	Easy to fit.

## Tips on Tape

- Tape requires skill and practice to apply. The best person to teach you how to tape is a Physiotherapist. However, we have included some resources to help guide you along.
- For tape to be effective it must be rigid tape.
- Kinesio tape is not effective on the ankle.
- Sensitive skin? Apply a layer of [underwrap](#) beneath the rigid tape.
- Factor at least 10-minutes prior to games/training to correctly apply the tape (longer initially).
- Look out for taping workshops in your area. Contact your NetballSmart Development Officer to arrange one.

