

Hand and Arm Ace Bandaging

After a burn or skin graft to the arms or hands, wrapping the limb with ace wraps helps prevent swelling, pooling of blood, graft loss, and permanent discoloration. The ace wraps may also prevent pain and itching by adding support and pressure to areas of inflammation and scarring.

Use a 3-inch ace bandage for the hands and lower arms. A 4-inch ace wrap may be used for larger (adult) upper arms. (In children and small adults, the width of the ace bandage will be based on the size of the arm). The pressure should be greatest at the fingers and decrease as you move up the hand and arm. This prevents swelling.

Never ace wrap an arm starting at the wrist, leaving the hand un-aced. This will lead to swelling of the hand. Always start ace wrapping at the hand and move upward to the underarm area.

1. Start the ace bandage at the outer aspect of the wrist, wrap around once, and go over the back of the hand and cross the palm. Pull the bandage diagonally as you cross the hand. Pull through between the thumb and index finger.



2. Continue to wrap the ace bandage across the palm, under the thumb, over the back of the hand, across wrist, and up over the back of the hand then between the thumb and index finger.



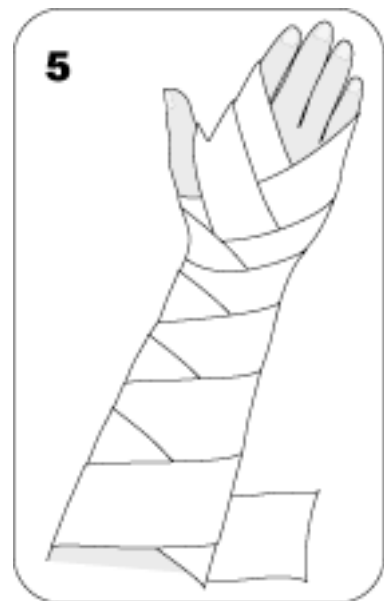
3. Now wrap around the wrist, pulling the ace bandage diagonally, reversing the diagonal with each wrap. A criss-cross pattern is made.



4. Continue criss-crossing the ace bandage diagonally up the lower arm.



5. Keep wrapping up the arm and secure the end of the ace wrap with tape. Check the hand to see that the finger tips are warm and pink. If they are cool, pale, numb, or tingling, the ace bandage is too tight. Remove and rewrap to apply the correct pressure without hurting circulation.



Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 3/2018 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#4405.