Kinesio Taping Method Adds Options to Trainers’ Toolbox

Kinesio Taping is one of the newest treatment methods for some members of the athletic training community. Developed in the 1970s by Japanese chiropractor Kenso Kase, the method enjoyed heightened exposure during the 2008 Olympics when athletes, including U.S. beach volleyball star Kerri Walsh, sported the distinctive thin tape strips.

“We use a variety of taping methods and wrapping for different injuries,” says Lance Eaker, MS, ATC, Certified Kinesio Taping Practitioner (CKTP®) at Saint Francis Medical Center. “The Kinesio method is one of the tools we use, but it’s not the only tool. It depends on the injury and what we’re trying to accomplish.”

Kinesio tape is an elastic, therapeutic tape designed to support injured muscles and joints, and relieve pain by lifting the skin to allow for improved blood and lymph flow. The tape comes in a variety of colors, and trainers apply strips in specific patterns depending on several factors.

Traditional athletic tapes generally form a stiff supporting structure that limits mobility to the wrapped area. Kinesio tape is latex-free, strong and flexible, does not inhibit mobility and is wearable for days at a time.

“It’s not a one-size-fits-all thing,” Eaker says. “The athlete needs a sports medicine professional to evaluate the injury in order to apply the appropriate technique. There are a lot of different ways to use this tape; that’s where the training comes in.”

For more information, please call the Sports Medicine team at Saint Francis Medical Center at 573-331-5153.
**Stubbend Seldom Equals Smart When It Comes to Dealing With Pain**

Sports participation often requires dealing with pain to some extent. Whether that pain involves simple fatigue or structural injury is the difference between being tough and being smart.

The severity of sports injuries varies from catastrophic (broken bones, torn tendons, etc.) to more minor issues that may worsen progressively over time. As tempting as it is for athletes to play through injuries, those aches and pains often are deserving of medical attention.

“We encourage athletes to notify the athletic training staff whenever they feel discomfort so we can determine whether treatment is appropriate,” says Lance Eaker, MS, ATC, CKTP®, certified athletic trainer at Saint Francis Medical Center. “Those aches and pains usually are warning signs that an injury has occurred, and few injuries just disappear on their own. Our goal is to help athletes heal quicker and avoid long-term downtime.”

Here are warning signs for some common sports injuries:

**Swelling** – The body’s reaction to injury comes from tissue inflammation or a buildup of fluid. Swelling within a joint typically causes pain and stiffness because of the restriction of movement for the tendons in that area.

**Spot Tenderness** – If pressing on a specific spot on your body causes pain, chances are an injury exists and deserves medical attention.

**Joint Pain** – Discomfort in the major joints such as knees, ankles, shoulders, hips, etc., can initially come from muscle or tendon issues. These can be some of the most debilitating injuries for athletes to endure, and the ones most in need of medical attention.

**Comparative Weakness** – If one of your arms or legs does not feel as strong as it normally does, check it against the opposite limb. A significant difference between the two indicates an injury has occurred.

**Reduced Motion** – Sometimes an injury can exist even when pain or swelling isn’t evident. Swelling within a joint can make it difficult to move as freely as normal. Test the limb in question against the other to determine if there is a difference.

**Numbness** – This sensation is a sign of nerve compression. Seek medical attention if the condition fails to dissipate in a short period of time.

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**Kinesio Tex Tape Has Many Fans – and Applications**

Those thin, often-colorful strips of tape that are increasingly seen on the bodies of athletes around the world are part of the Kinesio Tex Tape line of products. Certified practitioners, including those at Saint Francis Medical Center, use the elastic tape for treating sports injuries and a variety of other disorders.

The Kinesio Taping method facilitates the body’s natural healing process while providing support and stability to muscles and joints without restricting range of motion. The technique also provides extended soft tissue manipulation that prolongs the benefits of manual therapy administered in the clinical setting.

According to the manufacturer’s website, Kinesio Tex Tape assists in the treatment of a variety of orthopedic, neuromuscular, neurological and other medical conditions. It can alleviate pain and facilitate lymphatic drainage by minutely lifting the skin, allowing for a decrease in inflammation of the affected areas.

Clinical evaluation findings dictate the specific tape application and other possible treatments. The company says the tape is capable of re-educating the neuromuscular system, reducing pain and inflammation, enhancing performance, preventing injury, promoting good circulation and healing, and assisting in returning the body to homeostasis.

In some cases, treatment of a condition requires medical attention to other underlying conditions. Kinesio Tex Tape can be used in conjunction with other treatments and modalities within the clinic setting. It is effective during the rehabilitative and chronic phases of an injury, as well as useful as a preventive measure.

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