

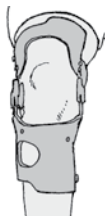
RELIEVER AIR OA BRACING Patient Instructions

The medical professional providing your brace will supervise your initial fitting and show you how to put on the brace. Please refer to these illustrations and instructions to help ensure you are putting your brace on properly.

Townsend Design's Reliever Air and Reliever OA knee braces are prescribed for patients who have been diagnosed with osteoarthritis, or a combination of osteoarthritis and a functional instability. Please familiarize yourself with all necessary instructions before wearing your brace.

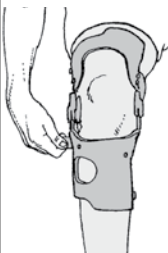
Fitting Instructions

NOTE: The fitting instructions for the Reliever Air and Reliever OA braces are essentially the same.



Step 1: Sit in a chair with your leg bent at a 45 degree angle. Position the brace on your leg so the hinges are centered at the upper third of the patella (knee cap). It is always better to put the brace on too high than too low.

1



Step 2: Begin by tightening the Synergistic Suspension Strap™. This strap, which is closest to the hinges on the lower portion of your brace, should be positioned in the flexion fold behind your knee on top of your calf muscle.

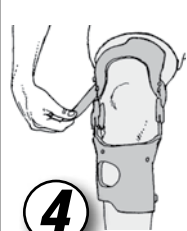
Note: The comfort pad on the inner side of this strap **MUST** be peeled back and cut if it prevents you from tightening the strap securely.

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Step 3: Tighten the bottom calf strap next to secure the lower shell to your leg.

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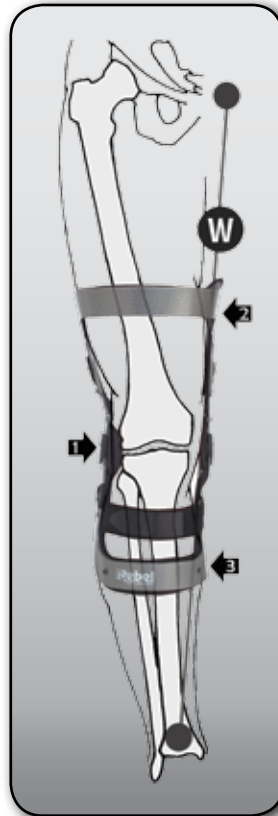


Steps 5-6: Next, tighten the two thigh straps to finish securing the brace to your leg.

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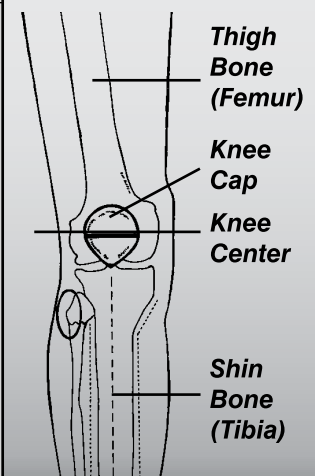
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How The Reliever Air Works

Osteoarthritis alters the natural characteristics of the knee joint. This generally occurs as part of the aging process or as the result of an earlier knee injury or knee surgery. OA causes degeneration of the articular cartilage and tissues which provide a natural cushion between the bones in the knee. Patients with OA will often have abnormal angulation of the leg -- medial OA causes the knee to bow out and lateral OA causes the knee to bow in. When you stand or walk and all of your weight is on your affected leg, your body weight is concentrated on the damaged side of the knee. This bone-on-bone contact can cause swelling, pain and other symptoms during and after routine physical activity. The Premier Reliever is custom fabricated with rigid graphite shells. The brace is designed to provide a three point pressure system (see picture, left). The corrective force applied to the leg is intended to maintain normal alignment (reduce abnormal angulation) and redistribute weight away from the damaged side of your knee. Relieving the load and maintaining a more neutral alignment of the leg generally relieves knee pain and reduces degeneration of the joint.

It is important that you put the brace on properly. The hinges should be aligned with knee center on your leg, which generally corresponds with the middle to upper third of the knee cap. It is better to put the brace on a little too high than too low. It is also important to make sure the hinges are not positioned too far anterior or too far posterior on the side of your knee. The medical professional fitting your brace will adjust the anterior tibia strap (illustration 2, below) to set the anterior/posterior position of the hinges.



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PATIENT BENEFITS

There are two primary benefits to be achieved from wearing your Townsend OA brace. First, you should experience a reduction in pain. Second, the brace will help slow down the degeneration of your knee joint.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend that you initially wear the brace for only a few hours at a time. It may take you several weeks to adjust to the rigid shells and corrective forces, so don't expect to feel comfortable wearing your brace the first day. Follow your physician's instructions regarding physical activities. If you experience less pain from wearing the brace, you may feel like walking farther and doing more physically strenuous activities. Be careful, however, not to overdo it. Gradually increase your activity level. Additionally, your skin may need to build up a tolerance for where the strap and shells contact your leg. You may experience mild aching in your knee joint as your leg muscles and ligamentous tissues stretch to allow the joint to open. If you experience severe pain that is hard to tolerate, or if you develop any skin redness or pressure sores, or experience any loss of circulation (tingling or numbness), stop wearing your brace and call the medical professional directing your care.

UNDERSLEEVE AND PROTECTIVE COVER

Your Townsend OA brace is designed to be worn directly against the skin. Neoprene or cotton undersleeves may be ordered that may increase comfort. Wearing an undersleeve can, however, cause sweating, make it harder for you to bend your leg, or cause the brace to slip down your leg. If you wear your brace for sports or activities that can potentially damage the shells or hinges, we recommend that you speak with the medical professional who fit your brace about ordering a protective cover.

Brace Care and Maintenance

Hinges -- The hinges on your brace are pre-lubricated. If sand, dirt or water get inside the hinges, they may require periodic lubrication. If you notice the hinges not gliding smoothly, a few drops of a synthetic lubricant can be applied. You can purchase this type of lubricant at a hardware store.

Straps -- The straps on your brace are nonelastic for maximum control. After considerable use, if the fibers on your strap do not adhere as well to the Velcro "hook" tab, if possible, cut the strap shorter so the Velcro hook tab adheres to a section of the strap that has fresher fibers. Otherwise the straps may need to be replaced.

Pads -- Your brace is lined with padding that provides a comfortable interface between your leg and the shells. Certain straps may also have pads. It is best not to remove the pads from the brace or straps. Wipe the pads after each use to remove any moisture and let the pads air dry. You can also clean the pads with a mild anti-bacteria soap and rinse them off with fresh water. DO NOT wash pads in a machine or dry them with a blow dryer.

WARRANTY

Under normal use and conditions, the shells and hinges on your brace are covered by a lifetime warranty against defects or breaking. Straps, hinge covers, and other replaceable parts are covered for six months. Free remolding service (to make fitting adjustments) is provided for six months from the date of manufacturing. If you experience a problem with the fit or function of the brace, please call the medical provider who ordered your brace.

PRODUCT DISCLAIMER

This OA brace is a prescription product that should be used in accordance with the directives of your physician as part of a treatment plan for managing your total health. While this type of OA brace has proven beneficial to many patients with unicompartament osteoarthritis, outcomes will vary based on factors including patient age, general health, severity of OA, and/or lack of compliance with instructions for how to put on and use the product. Townsend Design provides general information to assist medical professionals in determining which patients are most likely to benefit from an OA knee brace. Because patient selection and other factors are beyond our control, Townsend Design cannot provide specific guarantees this product will reduce pain or joint degeneration in all patients. Because of variations in the health and condition of each patient, Townsend Design also does not make any specific recommendations regarding appropriate activities for the user of this brace. Additionally, while Townsend's custom OA brace may aid in decreasing the risk or degree of injury to the leg for which it is fabricated, Townsend Design cannot and does not guarantee that the brace will restrict all instabilities or prevent injuries -- especially as the intensity of physical activity increases. Contact and high velocity sports are inherently dangerous and create a higher risk for injury.