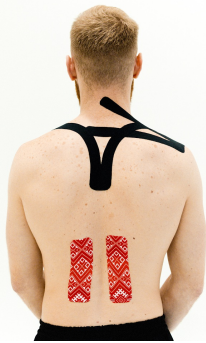


## Can You KT Tape Your Back Pain Away?



What's that weird tape you always see on Olympians? It's called KT tape or kinesiology tape, and here's how to use it on your back.

Whether you're an athlete or not, kinesiology tape can be a help to your back and several other painful areas. Although experts say that more study is needed, some have pointed to kinesiology's tape's benefits. For example, one 2019 study found that elastic taping, as it's also called, safely relieved knee pain, and reduced the need for pharmacological management in knee osteoarthritis.

When it comes to kinesio tapes for lower back pain, another study says that the tape is at its most effective when it's used along with other forms of pain therapies. If you're curious about kinesio taping for lower back pain, read on for insights from Theresa Marko, PT, DPT, MS, a board certified orthopedic clinical specialist in physical therapy and owner of Marko Physical Therapy in New York City.

### What is KT Tape?

Dr. Marko defines KT tape—also known as kinesiology tape, kinesio tape, and elastic tape—as a tape applied to the body that is different from your normal strapping tape (think: packaging tape) in that KT tape is “somewhat stretchy,” she says. Generally, it's used to either support a joint, improve circulation, or, as Dr. Marko describes it, provide feedback to the brain about a joint or muscle, something that's called proprioception. The tapes can help increase awareness of a certain painful area, which reminds us to not move in a way that hurts or have improper posture.

Dr. Marko says that generally, there are two ways you can tape someone: for support or increased awareness. What does this mean for back pain and spine injuries? She says, “At the low back, someone might benefit from support taping or an awareness taping, but in my experience, it's most likely a support taping that the person would enjoy the most.”

### How to Apply KT Tape for Lower Back Pain

There are several videos online that can teach someone how to KT tape a specific area of the body, but Dr. Marko explains it like this: You can either tape an area by stretching the tape, or, don't stretch the tape at all. Each joint and muscle requires various tapings, or different patterns and directions, and this information is readily available online through official kinesiology tape websites and YouTube channels.

In many instances, Dr. Marko says that a patient can absolutely apply KT tape to their own body parts that they can reach and access, such as the knee and ankle. But it will be a bit of a challenge to apply it to your

own shoulder or back. This is when it's helpful to ask a physical therapist, clinician, partner, family member, or close friend to apply the tape for you. The tape will be applied much better if someone else does it for you. KT tape is designed to adhere for an average of three to four days, even in the shower.

### **What Are the Potential Benefits of KT Tape for Back Pain?**

To kinesio tape low back pain, Dr. Marko says that in general, when someone other than yourself applies it, one would tape it in a shortened muscle position, which means the person would apply it while the other person is standing. She says, "Oftentimes, the taping can be two stripes going up and down [the back] or it can be a fan shape as it fans out towards the buttocks." As you consider KT tape for lower back pain, Dr. Marko shares that the tape can particularly offer support for lumbar spine muscles, and overall, decrease pain.

### **What the Evidence Says about KT Tape for Back or Neck Pain**

As mentioned, the research is still a bit muddled around kinesiology tape and its effectiveness for back or neck pain. Dr. Marko puts it plainly: "The evidence is actually not that good and shows that KT tape is not that effective," she says. "That being said, one could propose that perhaps the research doesn't prove it yet." She's noticed that when she applies kinesiology tape, people with back pain report that they "really enjoy wearing it" and "feel benefits from it."

### **KT Tape's Place in Spine Condition Recovery and Prevention**

If you're aiming to recover from a painful spine condition or prevent it in the first place, and you'd like your treatment plan to include kinesiology tape, low back pain can benefit. Dr. Marko emphasizes that in this case, the KT tape can help reduce pain, improve circulation, and provide support.

"I highly recommend for someone to see a doctor of physical therapy who can tease out where in the body someone is experiencing imbalances and dysfunction," Dr. Marko adds, saying that manual therapy and stabilization should be used in conjunction with KT tape.

#kinesiotaping, #taping, #physical therapist, #tapes, #tape.

<https://www.healthcentral.com/condition/back-pain/can-you-kt-tape-your-back-pain-away>