

# Understanding Binding: A Resource Guide for Transgender Youth



## What is binding?

Binding is when someone uses a tight-fitted piece of material to make their chest look flat.

## What can binders do for me?

It can help you feel more confident, comfortable, and joyful. It can also make your body feel more true to your identity. This can help others see you the way you feel inside.

## How can I protect my health when binding?

Binding in the wrong way over years can hurt your skin and your ribs. It can help improve your mental health, but it's important to be careful when binding.

## Be smart and safe:

- Wear materials that breathe, like cotton, spandex, or nylon.
- Make sure your binder isn't too small.
- Don't wear your binder for more than 8 hours at a time.
- Take your binder off before sleeping.
- Wash your binder often to avoid rashes or infections.
- Never use tape, duct tape, plastic wrap, or ACE bandages. They can hurt your body and make it hard to breathe.
- Make sure to use your exact measurements when buying a binder.

**Size Chart**

Size	Chest (inches)	Chest (centimeters)
XS	29-31	74-79
S	32-34	81-88
M	35-39	89-99
L	40-43	102-110
XL	44-47	112-119
2X	48-51	122-130
3X	52-55	132-142
4X	56-59	142-150

## Things I should know:

- Binding too tight is not better binding. This is not safe. The goal is to make your chest look flatter, not to crush your ribs or make it hard to breathe.
- If you feel pain, this means something is wrong. If your binder hurts, it might not be the right fit for you. You should remove your binder if you feel pain.
- Binders are not one-size-fits-all.
- There are different styles and lengths. Try different ones to see what works best for your body.

- Sports bras can also work as binders.
- Check return policies. It might take some time to find the right binder size, so it's good to know if you can return or exchange it.

### Where can I buy a binder?

You can buy binders from websites like Underworks.com, F2mbinders.com, and Amazon.com. Some sites also offer free binders. To get free binders, visit [www.pointofpride.org/free-chest-binders](http://www.pointofpride.org/free-chest-binders) or [www.Ftmessentials.com/pages/ftme-free-youth-binder-program](http://www.Ftmessentials.com/pages/ftme-free-youth-binder-program).

You can also get free binders through Trans\*Lounge, a program from the Los Angeles LGBT Center. To get a binder from Trans\*Lounge, you can fill out an online application at <https://community.lalgbtcenter.org/trans-lounge> or contact Gina Bigham at [gbigham@lalgbtcenter.org](mailto:gbigham@lalgbtcenter.org).

### Pro-Tips:

- Depending on your binder, it might be easier to step into it like pants rather than pulling it on like a t-shirt.
- You can wear a thin cotton undershirt underneath the binder to protect your skin.
- If it's hot outside, you can use baby powder without talc to help absorb sweat.

Binding for the first time might feel strange. Your first reaction to how you look might not be what you expected, but it can feel better over time.