

## Does kinesio tape work on a bruise?

I recently had a little slip sliding experience with a patch of ice on a bend up a hill I probably shouldn't have sought to climb having already come across a number of ice patches on my way there. *(If you're looking for advice on riding safely in ice, check out my piece on [staying safe in a big freeze](#).)*

Though the little collision with the ground wasn't massively helpful, it did give me the opportunity to gain some tangible evidence on the effectiveness of kinesio tape.

## What is kinesio tape?

My amazing physio, W.Krupa from [Parkview Osteopath's](#) in Reigate is a great believer in kinesio tape. I don't mean to make out I'm injury ridden, but we all get niggles – and when mine come around, Mr Krupa always fixes them with a massage, sometimes back manipulation, and k-tape. I've never been sure if the K-tape fixed the injury, or if it was the massage and manipulation – but I always consider it a good measure.

K-tape is adhesive fabric that is stretched across the skin by a physiotherapist. It's not as simple as just covering random areas in the tape – the study of kinesiology is quite complex, though some people do buy it online and try applying it at home, I'd recommend seeing someone who knows their stuff.

## How does it work?

The tape can be used for a number of injuries, promoting the healing process and helping to prevent further damage. There are a number of theories behind how the tape works, but the most common is that it increases blood and lymph flow to muscles and joints, thus soothing overworked muscles and strengthening those that are fatigued.

The evidence to support the effectiveness of K-tape is mixed, despite the fact it is widely used:



K-tape is commonly used on athletes

When I decided to book an appointment with Mr Krupa, I thought it seemed like a good opportunity to document the healing process. Particularly as k-tape is known to leave some interesting results when used on a bruise. The theory is that the tape lifts skin away from the area, allowing better blood flow, and draining the internal bleeding:

This patient suffered a severe hamstring strain (tear), which caused the bruising. She recovered from her pain using a combination of Kinesio Taping and Graston Technique.



So did it work for me?

Visually, certainly. Immediately after the crash, I had a large red patch, and a few days later this lovely bruise emerged.



The bruise didn't hurt too much, provided I didn't place too much pressure on it, for example with fast cadence, or lie on it. However, that was quite limiting. Bruising is of course caused by internal bleeding, so though a perfectly normal reaction to a bash, it's worth addressing a large bruise.

I headed off to the physio, and was soon bandaged up with a spiderweb of tape which looked a little bizarre. As you can see, the colouring of the bruise got a bit stronger:



I have to admit, I thought this looked a tiny bit elaborate – but past experiences have always proven the k-tape to work, and the logic behind increasing blood flow to the affected area seemed smart.

I couldn't quite resist the urge to take a little peek behind the tape to see how it was working – and it did seem to be doing the job:



In the first couple of days, I noticed the pain when lying on my right hand side was severely decreased, and the feeling that fluid was moving around my leg every time I stepped heavily on it, or pedaled fast, was decreasing. Eventually, it was time for the tape to come off, and the results were quite noticeable:



Now almost completely healed, I can still see that the area where the K-tape was is the most recovered:



Despite the fact that evidence around Kinesio tape is muddled, personally, I'll always pay the extra £2.50 when I visit the physio, to have it applied correctly.

This past experience also cemented in my mind the importance of having a physio with a knowledge of your history, whom you trust. Myself and my other half have been visiting the same man every time we have a niggle for over a year now, and we both always feel confident that he will both find the issue, and fix it – every time. Once discovered, a skilled and perceptive sports injury professional can be a real asset to hurdle free training and racing.