

# Using Tension Bands for Maintaining Erections

This handout is for those who want to use penile tension bands to help maintain erections. Sometimes after prostate cancer treatment, the venous occlusive mechanism, which helps keep blood in the penis to maintain the erection, does not work properly. You may be able to create an erection, but it cannot be maintained, especially if penetration is attempted.

Some individuals will use tension bands to help maintain the erection or to enhance sexual pleasure. The tension bands may be placed around the testicles, penis and testicles, or just around the base of the penis. The tension bands can be made of materials such as latex, silicone, or metal.

There are various designs of tension bands. The first three examples are from websites that sell medical products and tend to be more expensive. These can range in price from \$20 to \$40 each. The two last examples are less expensive options (\$10 to \$15 dollars) and can be found in adult love shops.



Osbon Tension Bands



Osbon EZ Tension Ring



POS-T-Vac Mach 1 Tension Bands



Stopper Ring



Sex and Mischief Nitrile Rings

## What to Consider When Choosing a Tension Band

Finding the right tension band is a matter of trial and error. You need to consider the size of the tension band, the amount of tension the band provides, and the amount of displacement. Displacement refers to the thickness of the tension band and plays an important role in the effectiveness and the level of comfort.

## Tips For Using Tension Bands

**Lubricate well:** Use plenty of water-based lubricant to put the tension band on (and re-apply more when taking it off). Not only will this make applying it and taking it off easier, but adequate amounts of lubricant will also keep the ring from causing irritation while on.

**Managing pubic hairs:** It is suggested to shave or at least trim the pubic hairs at the base of the penis. This minimizes pain from pulling hairs and also helps create a better seal if using the vacuum pump erection device (VED).

**Applying the tension band:** Some individuals may be using a tension band in addition to a Vacuum Erection Device (VED). If this is the case, you can load the tension band at the end of the cylinder and then slip it off onto the base of the penis when the erection is created. Some individuals will simply glide the tension band down to the lubricated base of the erect penis. Some individuals will put the tension band on prior to the penis getting erect. For some this will not impede the development of the erection, for others the optimal erection cannot be achieved since the tension band will impede the flow of blood.

**30-minute limit:** Do not leave the band on longer than is comfortable and **do not leave it on for more than 30 minutes.**

**Change it up:** After taking some time to get used to your penile tension band, some people experiment with adding an *additional* tension band that is larger and can go around the penis and testicles which can alter the sensations experienced. There are also vibrating versions of these larger tension bands as well.

It is important to shop around for the best prices. Try different types of tension bands to see what feels most comfortable and is most effective in maintaining your erection. Patience and persistence are essential for successful use of the tension band.

Disclaimer: This list of tension bands is not exhaustive. We recommend doing your own research on products of interest and safe use of products, reading reviews, and connecting with the retailers as needed. The list of tension bands are suggestions only and inclusion or exclusion from this list does not imply any endorsement, approval, recommendation of, or comment on the quality of business by VCH. Any concerns you have related to a product or service should be discussed and resolved with that particular business. VCH assumes no responsibility of any listed products or businesses.

Created by:

Prostate Cancer Supportive Care (PCSC) Program  
Level 6, Station 3, 2775 Laurel Street  
Vancouver, BC V5Z 1M9  
Phone: 604-875-4485 or Fax: 604-914-3003  
[pcscprogram.ca](http://pcscprogram.ca)

For more copies, go online at [vch.eduhealth.ca](http://vch.eduhealth.ca) or  
email [pchem@vch.ca](mailto:pchem@vch.ca) and quote Catalogue No. **GD.352.T46**  
© Vancouver Coastal Health, July 2025

The information in this document is intended solely for the  
person to whom it was given by the health care team.

[vch.ca](http://vch.ca)



Making better  
decisions together  
with patients  
and families