

# Binders & Compression Vests



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## **Introduction**

At Come As You Are, we work hard to try to provide a range of products and services that help all sorts of people find ways to express and experience their sexuality, gender, and orientation. As part of this mandate, we carry a line of compression vests (binders) to assist people in embodying their gender.

## **What is a Binder?**

Simply put, binders are garments designed to compress one's chest. People bind for many reasons: chest binding can be part of one's gender transition, gender play, or as part of post 'top' surgery recovery. Cisgender men often wear binders for gynecomastia. Regardless of why you're looking for a binder (or chest compression vest), there are some good options out there and some simple guidelines to follow.

## **Health & Safety**

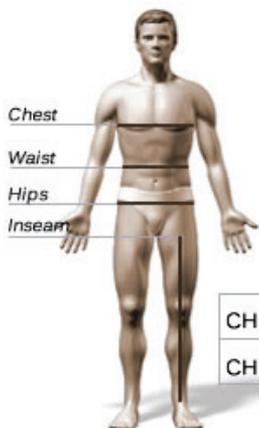
To our knowledge, there has never been a study done on the use of binders, but from our own experiences, we find that binding too tightly for too long can cause muscle compression and possibly limit lung capacity (with long-term use). Bind as little as you can, and try to find a binder that gives you adequate compression with a little room to breathe. Avoid binding during sleep, and only use the binder recommended by your surgeon if binding is part of your aftercare.

## **How to Choose a Binder**

We know that finding a binder or compression vest that works for you can be a challenging and confusing process. Here are some general tips for choosing a binder that fits

well, is comfortable, provides compression, and allows you to breathe easily!

First, it is important to determine what size (or range of sizes) will work best for you. Using the diagram below as a guide, begin by measuring around the widest part of the chest to determine which size is likely to fit you best.



### CHEST

With arms down on side, take a snug measurement around the fullest part of the chest over the nipples.

	XS	S	M	L	XL	2X	3X
CHEST (in)	28-31	32-35	36-39	40-43	44-47	48-51	52-55
CHEST (cm)	71-79	81-89	91-99	102-109	112-120	122-130	132-140

We currently offer three main binder styles which all compress well, but based on their length and configuration fit different bodies differently.

**Tri-Top Binder:** This binder binds to the belly-button area. It provides extensive chest compression without affecting the hips and lower body.

**Ultimate Binder:** This binder binds to the hip area and can be tucked in to pants or underwear. It is the most constrictive of our binders, compressing not only the chest, but also belly and hips. Some appreciate the flattening it provides of many lines on the torso, others find it prohibitively constricting for daily wear.

**Concealer Binder:** This binder features both a cotton undershirt and binder combined into one garment. The binder is designed to bind to the rib cage / midriff area. The undershirt allows folks to wear this binder as a single piece of clothing (or a comfortable extra layer in the winter!). This binder is ideal for anyone who already wears an undershirt, and the binder is sewn into the tank to ensure it never rolls up.

## **Care and Cleaning**

Binders should always be hand-washed or machine washed in cold water as hot water will cause the binder to wear out prematurely. Unless the binder has stretched out significantly, binders should never be dried in a dryer as heat will shrink and damage the binder.

## **How to Order**

We strongly suggest trying on different binder sizes before purchasing - they fit each person differently. We have a website featuring all of our products, including binders and other products designed for trans\* and genderqueer folks. If you are interested in learning more about our binders, as well as reading reviews from customers, please do feel free to visit the site. Alternatively, we're more than happy to discuss our binders over the phone or via email with you.

You can order online - and get free shipping when you subscribe to our newsletter - over the phone, or in person at our shop. We are happy to exchange sizes if you find that binder you ordered online doesn't fit, and we recommend trying on binders in-store whenever possible.