



THE LEADING NAME IN  
COMPRESSION HOSIERY

# YOUR LEGS

and compression  
stockings, socks  
and tights



KEEPING BRITAIN  
ON ITS FEET

## The problem with veins

Veins carry blood from your feet and legs back to your heart. When you are standing they have to work hard to push the blood back towards your heart against the force of gravity.

Two things help your veins to return the blood up your legs:

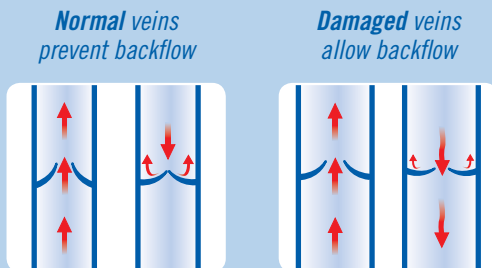
### Your leg muscles

Every time you take a step or put your heel to the ground the calf muscles in your legs squeeze round your veins, helping them to push the blood upwards.

### Your vein valves

Inside your veins you have valves like small, one-way swing doors. As the blood pushes upwards the swing doors open; if it tries to sink down your leg the swing doors close to stop the backflow.

Over time, particularly if you take little exercise or have a job that involves a lot of standing or sitting, the veins in your legs can become enlarged. If they do, your veins will find it increasingly difficult to pump your blood up your leg. Also, as the diameter of your veins increases, your valves will no longer meet in the centre of your vein, so blood can flow back down towards your feet.



*When this happens your veins need help.*

## Signs that your veins need help

There are several physical signs that your veins need help to return the blood from your lower leg. These include:

- ▶ tired, aching, sometimes painful legs, made worse by standing or sitting for long periods of time and relieved by putting your feet up
- ▶ swollen ankles at the end of the day
- ▶ spider veins – tiny blood vessels visible just under the surface of your skin
- ▶ bulging varicose veins caused by blood pooling
- ▶ itchy, hot or discoloured skin – the colour may vary from brown through to blue/black
- ▶ a wound or sore on your leg which does not heal or is very slow to heal – known as a venous ulcer.

### How to help your veins

There are several things you can do to help your veins, including:

- ▶ **Compression hosiery** – using graduated compression stockings, socks and tights to help push the blood back up towards your heart.
- ▶ **Lifestyle changes** – having a healthy diet and taking exercise, for example, will help you to protect your legs and feet from further damage.



## How compression hosiery works

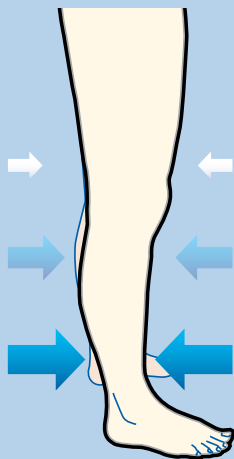
### Overall compression

Firstly, compression stockings, socks and tights gently squeeze your legs. This squeezing helps to reduce the blood flow through the veins on your skin surface. It also brings the vein walls closer together, which will help the valves prevent the blood slipping back towards your feet.

### Graduated compression

Compression hosiery is more complex than simply squeezing your legs – the compression gets lighter as it goes up your legs. You will notice that they are tighter round your ankle than round your calf and, if you wear tights or thigh length stockings, they will be tighter round your calf than round your thigh. This progressive reduction in tightness is called 'graduated compression' and is a particularly effective way to push blood up your leg.

- ▶ **Lowest compression at your thigh** – Keeps the blood moving upwards, towards your heart.
- ▶ **Intermediate compression at your calf** – Assists your calf muscle as it pushes blood up your leg.
- ▶ **Highest compression at your ankle** – Helps to move blood from your foot and ankle into your calf, so the muscle can push it onwards.



## Why wearing your Scholl compression hosiery is so important

When your veins are not returning blood from your legs efficiently, you are at risk from several complications:

- ▶ **Varicose veins** – which can be unsightly, itchy and uncomfortable
- ▶ **Inflammation of the veins** – also known as phlebitis, inflamed veins can cause reddening, overheating and pain along the course of the vein
- ▶ **Thrombosis** – poor return of blood from your legs increases your risk of blood clots forming in your veins
- ▶ **Venous ulcers** – when blood does not flow properly in your legs the nutrients and oxygen it carries may not reach every cell properly. This can damage the tissues, leading to ulcers on the skin that are difficult to heal.

### The benefits

Medical studies have shown that wearing compression hosiery every day can decrease all these complications. In particular, wearing compression stockings, socks and tights when you have had a venous ulcer can dramatically decrease the chance that the ulcer will come back.

Your doctor or nurse has prescribed compression hosiery for you because they believe in the benefits you will gain. To enjoy those benefits you need to wear your compression stockings, socks or tights every day.



# Top tips for caring for your legs

In addition to wearing your Scholl compression stockings, socks or tights there is plenty more you can do to keep your legs happier and healthier:



## Walk or exercise regularly

This will help your calf muscles to pump blood up your veins. (Always check with your doctor or nurse before making a change to your exercise regimen.)



## Eat a healthy, balanced diet

Drink plenty of water and include plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables to help prevent constipation – straining to go to the toilet can push blood downwards into your legs, making vein problems worse.



## Maintain a healthy weight

Being overweight puts extra stress on your veins, so if you need to lose weight ask your doctor or nurse for advice on a suitable weight loss plan.



## Look after your skin

If you have dry skin apply a bland moisturising cream. This will keep the skin on your legs and feet supple.



## Look at your legs and feet regularly

Watch out for any changes in colour or sores. Use a mirror or ask a friend to help you to look round the back of your legs. Contact your doctor or nurse if:

- ▶ your hosiery seems tighter than before
- ▶ your toes feel numb, cold or if they change colour
- ▶ your leg feels itchy, hot or painful
- ▶ there are any new sore or oozing patches on your legs.





### Avoid extreme temperatures

Extreme heat and cold can damage fragile skin so avoid hot baths, hot water bottles and sitting too close to a fire or heater.



### Always attend your doctor's or out-patients' appointments

It is important that the health of your legs is regularly monitored so action can be taken quickly to help prevent further damage.



### Wear your Scholl compression hosiery on both legs

If you have problems with the veins in one leg it is likely that the other may eventually be affected too, so Scholl recommends that you protect your legs by wearing our compression stockings or socks on both legs. However, always follow the advice of your healthcare professional.



### Wear your Scholl compression hosiery every day

Problems with your veins do not go away, so to look after your legs always wear your Scholl compression stockings, socks or tights every day.



### Take care of your toenails

If you need help, see a chiropodist or podiatrist for foot and nail care. If you take care of your own nails, be particularly careful not to damage the skin surrounding them.



### Wear comfortable shoes and loose socks

Make sure what you wear does not damage your feet or shorten the life of your compression hosiery. Be careful that your shoes do not rub.

## Frequently asked questions

### Q What types of hosiery are available?

A There are lots of different hosiery available to suit your needs. There are stockings, hold-ups for women who prefer not to wear a suspender belt, socks which can be worn under trousers and tights. Scholl produce a varied range, which now includes:

- ▶ **Scholl Softgrip Stockings and Hold-ups**  
Our leading brand now uses a revolutionary fibre which makes them softer and silkier than regular stockings. This makes them easier to put on and more comfortable to wear, whilst still providing excellent support. Stockings are available in Classes I, II & III. Hold-ups are available in Class I.
- ▶ **Scholl Softgrip Ribbed Socks**  
Smart and practical under trousers, and look just like normal socks. Available in Classes I & II.
- ▶ **Scholl Softgrip Cotton Rich Stockings**  
Made with high cotton content to help protect sensitive skin. Available in Class II.
- ▶ **Scholl Softgrip Tights**  
Provide light support and a comfortable alternative to stockings. Available in Classes I & II.

### Q Why do some stockings have closed toes while some are open?

A There is no medical difference between the two. People with longer feet may find open toes more comfortable.

**Q What do the different classes of hosiery mean?**

**A** Stockings, socks and tights that can be prescribed by your doctor or nurse fall into three classes: I, II & III. These numbers relate to increasing levels of compression, with class I being the lightest compression through to class III being the strongest.

The class your doctor or nurse chooses to prescribe for you depends upon how severe the problems in your leg veins are and how much help they need.

**Q How should I take care of my Scholl compression hosiery?**

**A** All of the Softgrip range are machine washable. To wash your stockings, socks or tights:

- ▶ machine wash at a maximum temperature of 40°C
- ▶ dry flat
- ▶ dry away from direct heat
- ▶ do not dry clean, bleach or iron.

Your Scholl compression stockings, socks or tights should be washed after every wear, so it is best to have two or more pairs. Handled carefully, your hosiery should last for 30 washes.

In general, try to avoid snagging or laddering your Scholl compression hosiery:

- ▶ make sure your fingernails and toenails are free from rough edges
- ▶ remove any jewellery which could catch as you put your hosiery on
- ▶ check your shoes for sharp edges which could damage your stockings, socks or tights and your feet.

**Q Can I buy more pairs of stockings, socks or tights?**

**A** Your doctor or nurse will provide you with a regular repeat prescription for your Scholl compression hosiery and you will be able to replace them should they become damaged.

You may, however, like to have a couple of extra pairs. For example, ladies might wish to have a black pair for evening wear or might prefer socks instead of below knee stockings to wear under trousers.

Extra pairs of all Scholl compression stockings, socks and tights can be bought from your local pharmacy. Your pharmacist will need to know that you have been properly measured to ensure you are sold the correct size.

**Q Why is Scholl compression hosiery a good choice for me?**

**A** At Scholl we have been caring for people's legs and feet for more than 100 years. We use our experience to select the finest, most comfortable yarns and use the latest production methods. The result is compression stockings, socks and tights that effectively treat venous problems and are stylish and easy to wear, every day.

At Scholl we are happy to help and advise all our customers. Our website, [www.scholl4legs.co.uk](http://www.scholl4legs.co.uk) has lots more useful information about leg problems, helpful hints and tips about how to care for your legs and more questions and answers.



You can also call our Consumer Relations Department on 0800 074 2040 to speak to one of our advisors.



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**More information on wearing Scholl compression hosiery is available from the following:**

- ▶ our web site on **[www.scholl4legs.co.uk](http://www.scholl4legs.co.uk)**
- ▶ our Consumer Relations Department on **0800 074 2040**

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