

look good, feel better: a trans masc guide

Gender expression is how you show your gender identity externally, in ways that other people can see. This might mean changing your hairstyle, clothes, body language/ mannerisms, or voice because you want them to be more masculine or feminine.



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The two main non-medical ways that some transgender men and trans masculine people use to create a more masculine appearance are **binding** and **packing**. Binding is a way to create a flatter chest, while packing creates a bulge in the pants. While not every trans man chooses to use these methods, many find they relieve dysphoria and help them feel confident.

This **12 card set** is a guide on non-medical ways that some transgender men choose to change their appearance in order to feel more comfortable, confident, and safe. It is broken up into 4 sections:

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terms to know

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Trans/Transgender: An adjective used to describe a person whose gender identity is different from their assigned sex at birth.

Cis/Cisgender: A term used to describe a person whose gender identity matches their sex assigned at birth. It means the opposite of transgender.



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Transition: The process many, but not all, transgender people undergo to live 'authentically' in their gender identity. This process may involve altering their gender expression socially or physically (such as name, clothing and hairstyle). Transitioning may also involve biomedical and surgical interventions (gender-affirming healthcare) that align the individual's body more closely with their gender identity.

Transgender: A term used to refer to a transgender person who identifies as male (i.e. a person whose sex was assigned female at birth but who identifies as male).

AFAB/AMAB: Assigned Female/Male at Birth. An abbreviated method often used to specifically describe one's sex at birth. This assignment may not accord with a person's own sense of gender identity as they age. Most people's gender identity coincides with their sex assigned at birth. However, for transgender people, their gender identity is different from their sex assigned at birth.

FTM: Female to Male. *Only refer to someone as FtM/MtF if they themselves identify that way. Many trans people don't just identify with their gender but the sex as well. For example, a trans man may see their physical body as male, not female, with or without hormones or surgeries.

Dysphoria: The feeling of physical, mental, or emotional discomfort one experiences when their body does not line up with the gender in their head, or when one is gendered incorrectly. Not a requirement for being trans.

Pass/Passing: A term used to describe when other people do not know someone is trans and they see a trans woman as a woman and a trans man as a man. Many trans people do not like the term 'passing' because it implies deception or trickery, but it can be important for those who want to live 'stealth' or as their true gender without disclosing their status as transgender.

DIY: Do it yourself (Homemade).

travelling safe

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Can I bind/pack while travelling?

Knowing your rights and doing your research can help you be safe when traveling. There have been reports of trans people being harrassed, arrested, or deported.



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Passengers at most airports are asked to go through a screening process.

Before flying:

- Remove any metal parts that may set off a metal detector, such as safety pins used to keep a packer in place
- Be aware that a heavily-bound chest can raise concerns that a passenger is hiding something beneath the wrap
- Hide packers in a case or bag with other objects

What happens if you are confronted about your binder/packer?

- [1] Explain what the item is.
- [2] If a pat down is required, the officer conducting it will match the gender on your passport or other documentation.
- [3] Request for a private screening. Bring a friend if possible.
- [4] Remember you have the right to speak with a supervisor at anytime during the screening.

"It may be better to remove your binder and packer while traveling and put them in your carry-on luggage."

what is a binder?

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A chest binder is a compression garment that can be used to flatten (or bind) your chest.



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Why bind? Do I need to bind? Wearing a binder is a personal choice. Many trans men want to flatten their chest in order to get a more masculine body shape and alleviate chest dysphoria. However, some trans men choose not to do this for a variety of different reasons. They may already have a small chest or may be unable to bind for medical reasons.

"Binding can be important for 'passing' and safety reasons. Especially with a larger chest, the presence of breasts may cause you to be read as female or out you as transgender."

Photo [1] GC2B Tank Binder USD \$35.

Keep in mind

How flat your binder will make you depends on your body/chest size and shape.

Often, those with larger chests have difficulty getting completely flat (but if you look at cisgender men - their chests aren't completely flat anyway! A little chest can often look like pecs.)



what binder should i choose?

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Tip: To make it easy to get in and out of your binder, consider purchasing one with zips or velcro on the side.



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Pros & Cons

Tank

Looks like a tank top and covers the whole torso. Compresses your stomach and hips. May roll up on the bottom and be hard to put on and take off.

Half

Looks like a vest that ends around your belly. May have zips or velcro. Allows more ventilation. Doesn't look like a tank top, but doesn't look like a bra either.

Sports Bra

Doesn't look like a binder, so you can use it openly even if you're not out. Can be purchased in many clothing stores. May not have as much compression as a binder.



Photo [1] Peacock Tank Binder USD \$36. [2] GC2B Half Length Binder USD \$33.

binder do's, and don'ts

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While **binding** can make people feel more confident and safe in public, it can take a toll on your body, causing difficulty breathing or back pain. Here are some tips to take care of your body when wearing a binder.



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Do

Make Sure You Are Wearing The Right Size. If you can't breathe, or your binder causes pain, discomfort, or digs into your skin, it is too small. When purchasing a binder, follow each company's own sizing guide.

Practice Safety & Care When Exercising. You can exercise and swim in binders, however it is suggested to wear a size up from your regular fit as it is important not to bind too tightly while exercising. Be sure to stretch and breathe, and follow healthy binding etiquette.

Stretch. A few times an hour; remind yourself to sit up straight, relax your shoulders, and take full, deep breaths all the way into your belly, exhaling slowly. Do some simple stretches focusing on opening the chest and releasing the tension in your upper back.

Don't

Wear Your Binder Too Long. Most companies recommend only binding from 6 to 8 hours a day. This can be difficult for those at work or school, but it is important to give your body time to rest and breathe. The most important thing is to listen to your body and how it is feeling.

Sleep In Your Binder. It is important to give your body time to relax after binding. The health risks of binding through your sleep are still unknown, and we strongly recommend never sleeping in your binder.

Use Tape Or Bandages To Bind. Although it may seem like an easy solution, using tape or bandages can cause permanent damage to breast tissue, ribs, lungs, and nipples. Most tape and bandages are not made for binding and do not allow your body to move naturally. Tape can also be very painful to remove!

what is a packer?



A **packer** is a phallic-shaped object used to create a bulge in your pants. This is commonly known as 'packing'.



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Why pack?

Do I need to pack?

Whether or not to pack is a personal choice. Many trans men experience bottom dysphoria (a feeling of discomfort with their genitals) and find that packing can relieve that discomfort.

However, some find that using a 'fake' penis causes more dysphoria or find packing to be personally unnecessary.

While most people don't look hard at other people's crotches, there are situations in which the lack of a bulge could be a giveaway. For example, when you're wearing tight pants, working out at the gym, or going swimming.



*Photo [1] Reelmagik 4.5" Basic Packer
USD \$69 each.*

"Packing can help a trans man feel more confident or safe in certain situations."

what
packer
should
i choose?

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Tip: You don't want to look like you have a hard-on all the time, so choose a packer size that fits your body!



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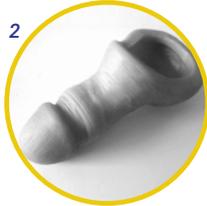
1



Pack Only

Creates a penis-looking bulge in your pants.

2



Pack & Pee

In addition to the bulge, you can use this to stand and pee. Otherwise known as a Stand-to-Pee Device (STP).

3



Pack & Play

A rod can be inserted to this packer to be used for sexual penetration.

4



Pack, Pee, & Play

This 3-in-1 prosthetic can do all of the above.

Photo [1] Mr Limpy Soft Packer USD \$12. **[2]** Transthetics EZP USD \$195. **[3]** Reelmagik 4.75" Uncircumsized Pack N Play USD \$479. **[4]** FreeToM Sleek 5" 4-in-1 USD \$167.

making your own sock packer



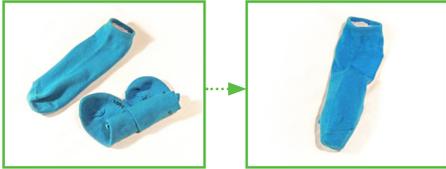
Socks are often a trans guy's first packer. Everyone has them and it is a good way to see if you like packing and want to invest in a real packer. While you can simply stuff some socks into your pants, here is one method for making an actual packer.



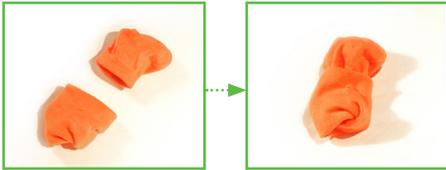
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DIY Sock Packer

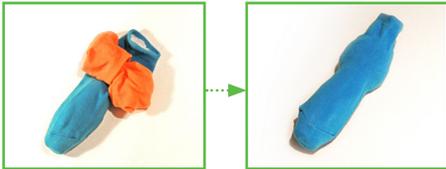
What you need: 5 medium length/ankle socks. 3 rubber bands. 1 safety pin.



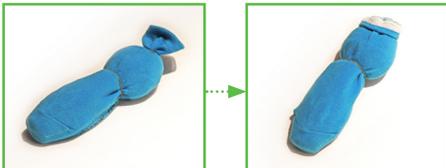
Step 1: Fold and roll three socks together so that there are two socks inside of one, creating a cylindrical shaft.



Step 2: Fold the other two socks into balls and put one of the balled up socks into the other.



Step 3: Put the balled up socks from Step 2 into the cylindrical shaft from Step 1, resting just above the shaft.



Step 4: Wrap one rubber band around the tip, one between the balls and shaft, and one at the end, behind the balls. Fold the edge over so that it shapes the balls more and put the safety pin on top of that.

You're done! Use the safety pin to attach the packer to the inside of your underwear.

what
is an
stp?

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An **STP**, or Stand-to-Pee device, is a type of prosthetic with a funnel that allows trans men to pee standing up.



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Why use an STP? Do I need to?

Many trans men want to be able to pee standing up at the urinal, whether for convenience, safety, or not having to wait for a stall. However, a lot of trans men choose not to use STPs because they are expensive and hard to learn to use successfully without leaking.

Start by practicing in the shower or while standing in your bathtub, then move to the toilet.



Tip: Learning to STP with a device takes some practice, and it's a good idea to master the technique at home before attempting it at a public bathroom.

Photo [1] Transthetics EZP USD \$195.

what
step
should
i choose?

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Tip: What works for someone else may not work for you. Don't be afraid to try out different types and models!



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Types



Form: An STP that looks like a penis. Can also be used to pack. May be much more expensive than the other options.



Function: An STP that doesn't look like a penis, but can be easily stored in your pocket before use. Often used by cis women when camping or travelling.



DIY: An STP funnel that you can make at home from a soft container lid or other household items. Often cheap and disposable.

Photo [1] New York Toy Collective Sam the STP USD \$75. [2] pStyle in Olive USD \$11.99.

packer and strapon faq

12

What size packer should I use?

The BIGGEST thing to keep in mind is you may not want a BIG packer. The average flaccid penis size is about 3.5 inches. If your packer is too big, you could look like you have a hard-on, which can be awkward.



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How do I make my packer stay in place?

Many trans men choose to just wear it directly in their underwear, however there are various ways to make your packer stay in place, from making or purchasing harnesses or packing pouches to simply using the flap in many men's boxer-briefs.



What is the proper placement of my packer?

One mistake trans men often make is placing their packer too high on the pubic bone. The cis male package is actually lower, closer to the location of trans male anatomy.

The other question is whether to “pack up”, “pack down” or to the side. Depending on the size and shape of your packer, simply having the shaft stick straight down may look too large or be uncomfortable. You can tuck the shaft into your waistband or to one side at an angle, making it look less apparent.

How to take care of my packer to make it last longer?

If you're using a silicone-based packer, wash with light soap and store it in a box with corn flour after drying when not in use. Label the box so you won't accidentally throw it away. If you're using fabric-based packer like socks, you can simply pop that into a washer and use it only when it is fully dry.

Photo [1] Harness: #1 Laboratory Soft Slingshot Style Harness USD \$24.

Packer: #1 Laboratory Model D 4.5" STP USD \$80.