

Getting Used to your WCR Brace in the beginning:

The Wood Rigo Cheneau (WCR) brace is doing a lot of work to correct your spine. It is stretching out your spine (elongation), untwisting you (de-rotation) and pushing on your scoliosis curves (three-point forces). Because your brace is doing all this at the same time, it will take a while for your body to adjust to the brace. You may feel like certain parts of the brace are too long or too high, or that certain parts are pushing your body. Remember, you feel that way because we are trying to encourage your body to change – in the right direction! You will gradually increase the time you wear the brace each day to get used to the new brace. Your body will change and adapt. You will work with your family, your orthotist, and your own body to gradually increase the time wearing the brace bit by bit until you can wear it the recommended amount. In most cases, you need to wear your brace as much as possible (usually more than 20 hours per day). Your spine doctor may tell you a specific amount of time.

GOAL WEAR TIME:

Week 1 (*Day 1 to Day 7*) – For the first week, only wear your brace at night. The first night you may not be able to sleep the whole night. It is OK to take the brace off and get some rest. Each night you should try to wear the brace more until you can sleep every night in the brace.

Sleeping in the brace gives your body time to stretch out (elongate) without gravity pulling you down, like it does when you stand up. Also, for most patients, the higher plastic parts like under the arm are easier to deal with when sleeping.

Check your skin for redness or rubbing or bruising that does not go away within 30 minutes after removing the brace. Some parts of the brace may still feel too long, but this is normal! You are still adjusting your body to the brace.

Week 2

Day 8 – Wear your brace 1 hour in the evening while upright, after school when you are at home. Keep wearing it while sleeping – you are adding to your brace time and tolerance!

Day 9 – Wear your brace 2 hours in the evening while upright. Keep wearing it while sleeping at night. Before going to bed, check your skin for redness or rubbing or bruising that does not go away within 30 minutes after removing the brace.

Day 10-13 – Add one hour each day to your wearing schedule, so each day you are wearing the brace one hour more than the previous day. You can keep adding hours until you are wearing the brace all night and all evening outside of school.

Day 14 - After 2 weeks, you should be able to wear your brace all day and all night. You can begin wearing your brace to school without taking it off. You should be able to wear it all day.

Now you can decide which hours of the day you will have the brace off. It may be off for sports, bathing, or long car rides. Remember, you still want to try to be in the brace at least 20 or more hours per day, so chose your “break time” wisely.

It may take a full month for you to fully get used to the brace. Your orthotist will have an appointment with you before your in-brace x-ray, usually about 4-6 weeks after the brace is fit. At that time, the orthotist will adjust for fit, function and discomfort in the brace. You will get an x-ray and the orthotists may need to see you again for further adjustments.

Wear and Care Guide for your Scoliosis Brace

Your brace must be tight fitting to function properly. Because your brace contacts your body all day, it is important for you to take care of your skin, your body, and your brace.

Wearing:

- Always wear a clean shirt under your brace. It can be a tight T-shirt, a tank top or camisole, or a specific brace shirt. Usually we look for something thin, cotton or moisture wicking, and with flat or no seams. Try to make it tight enough to have very few wrinkles underneath your brace.. These shirts can also include a flap under the arm to go over the high underarm portion of your brace.
- Wearing your brace tight is important! If you have the straps too loose, the brace twists and moves around on your body and causes rubbing. When the brace is tight, it does not shift on your body as much. Your orthotists may make marks on the straps to show you how tight you should wear it. You might even have a goal mark to work up to if you can not wear the brace tight right away.
- Bathe or shower daily to keep your skin clean and healthy under the brace.
- Avoid putting lotion on your skin where the brace touched. This can make your skin softer or sensitive to pressure.

- Pay attention to the skin underneath your brace. If you see an area that is pink or red, that is normal, if the redness fades within 30 minutes after removing the brace. There should not be lasting pain, skin sores or bruising in those areas. If you have lasting pain, bruising, numbness, skin sores, rashes or redness that persists past 45 minutes, please contact your orthotist to adjust the brace.
- Heat and humidity do make the brace harder to wear. You may take 15-minute breaks to air out your skin and body if it is extremely hot and humid. Air conditioning and fans may help keep you cool. The WCR brace is not as hot as some other brace styles because there are more holes and open areas that do not touch your body, but it can still make you feel hotter than normal.

Cleaning:

- Every few days, clean your brace with soap and water and a washcloth and let it air dry. You can wipe down the pads under the arm (a little scrubbing is OK). The brace does not absorb sweat, but sometimes deodorant or soap from your body sticks to the brace and those residues can absorb odors.
- Once a week, wipe your brace with rubbing alcohol. Rubbing alcohol in a spray bottle works well for covering the brace. This kills bacteria and germs which can cause smells.
- Avoid using Clorox wipes or bleach on your brace because they can irritate your skin.

Logistics:

- You should plan with your school, your teachers, and your parents what times of day the brace will be on and off. Sometimes, you may need to remove the brace for gym class or sports at school and you will need to work with the school to have a place to store it during gym if there are not locker spaces available. Many schools have a school nurse who will assist taking the brace on and off and storing it. Teachers, coaches, or the main office also provide this kind of support. You may also need to request extra time to change if you do not have enough time. The school is required to make accommodations, but if you need any support or letters written to help your school understand, please contact your orthotist. You have a right to ask for help, and some schools will make a special plan to make sure you can successfully wear your brace at school and get the help you need.

- If you have a heavy backpack, you should carry it on both shoulders, especially with your brace on. Some schools allow you to have two copies of your books (one for home and one for school) so you do not have to carry so much back and forth.

Sleeping:

- You may sleep in any position you are comfortable with in the brace.
- Some people feel that extra pillows or a body pillow helps to prop them up while sleeping and makes sleeping easier since your body cannot twist when the brace is on.
- Extra fans or airflow in the room help keep you from getting hot at night. You may also need to wear cooler clothing if you are too hot at night.

Maintenance:

- Inspect your brace for cracks, loose straps or rivets or padding falling off. If something breaks, contact your orthotist immediately. If something is in disrepair, you can contact your orthotist to repair it. You should see your orthotist every 3 months to check your brace for the best fit and function. Remember, even if your brace feels GREAT – you may have grown – your orthotist will need to make changes to keep up with you and your changing spine!
- Track your height at home on a wall or with measurements once you get your brace. If you grow more than 1 inch, especially in less than 3 months, you should see your orthotist for adjustments. The brace usually does not last more than 3 inches of total growth or 12-15 pounds of weight change. After that much growth your brace may need to be replaced. Your orthotist will decide whether the brace is fitting correctly by looking at all the parts of the brace and how it corrects your body and your spine. Remember: You are an important part of this team! Your job as the brace wearer is to get used to the brace and wear it as much as possible. You may have to get used to some uncomfortable parts, but you should let your family and your orthotist know if something is bothering you about the brace. You never know if the brace can be changed if you do not ask! Your orthotist will let you know if something can change or if it is something you must get used to. Many patients say that the brace feels better after leaving the orthotist, even though it felt “fine” before. It is the orthotist’s job to check all the parts of the brace to make it fit your body the best way possible. If you work together as a team, you will have the best result for your spine.