



KNOWLEDGE CENTRE | GUIDE 01

Preventing Chafing

A practical guide to reducing friction, managing moisture and staying comfortable during sport, work and everyday activity.

PREPARE BEFORE FRICTION STARTS

Chafing is easier to prevent than to manage once skin is already sore. A few minutes spent checking clothing, contact points and skin preparation can protect the comfort of your whole day.

IN THIS GUIDE

Why chafing happens • Common hot spots • Before, during and after activity • When to stop and seek advice

Free, ungated practical guidance from SLIPSTREAM®

Stay Comfortable.

What chafing is - and why it starts

Chafing is surface irritation caused by repeated rubbing. It commonly develops where skin rubs against skin, seams, straps, footwear or equipment. Heat and moisture can soften the skin surface and make repeated friction more troublesome.

The first warning may be a hot spot, tingling or tenderness. If the rubbing continues, the area can become red, sore or broken. The practical aim is therefore to reduce friction, control excess moisture and act early.

The friction triangle

RUBBING Repeated movement at one contact point	MOISTURE Sweat, rain or retained dampness	TIME Longer exposure means more repetitions
--	---	---

Common hot spots

- Inner thighs and groin folds
- Underarms, bra bands and under the breasts
- Nipples and waistbands during running
- Feet, toes and heel areas inside footwear
- Where rucksack straps, waist belts or workwear repeatedly move
- Cycling contact points, especially when clothing or bike fit is unsuitable

KNOW YOUR OWN PATTERN

Past irritation is your best map. Note exactly where discomfort begins, which kit you were using, the weather, and how long you had been active.

Before activity: prepare the contact points

Good prevention begins before you leave home. Test changes during ordinary training or shorter activities, not for the first time on an important event day.

✓	Start with clean, dry, intact skin. Avoid applying anti-chafe products to open, bleeding or infected-looking skin unless a healthcare professional has advised otherwise.
✓	Choose smooth, well-fitting clothing. Sweat-wicking and seamless garments can help reduce retained moisture and rubbing. Fit should be secure without digging in.
✓	Check seams, labels and edges. Turn the garment inside out and feel the likely contact areas. A small raised seam can become significant over thousands of repetitions.
✓	Use familiar footwear and socks. Check for creases, grit and dampness. Replace worn socks or footwear that no longer holds the foot consistently.
✓	Apply your chosen anti-chafe product correctly. Follow its directions and concentrate on known hot spots. More product is not automatically better.
✓	Allow time to settle. Dress only after the product has been applied as directed, so clothing does not immediately remove or redistribute it.

A note for cyclists

British Cycling advises against wearing underwear beneath cycling shorts because retained moisture and extra seams can increase rubbing. Correct saddle position, suitable shorts and a clean, dry chamois are part of the same prevention system.

SLIPSTREAM® APPLICATION PRINCIPLE

Use small, controlled amounts on the areas that normally rub, working the cream in until clear. Always follow the directions on your own product label and carry out a patch test before first use.

During activity: respond to the first signal

Do not wait for a hot spot to become painful. Early adjustments are quicker and more effective than trying to continue through worsening irritation.

If you notice heat, stinging or rubbing

- Stop somewhere safe and inspect the area.
- Remove grit, salt deposits or a clothing crease without scrubbing the skin.
- Pat damp skin dry; avoid vigorous towel rubbing.
- Adjust the garment, strap, sock or equipment position that is causing movement.
- Reapply an appropriate anti-chafe product only as its label directs and only to suitable skin.
- If pain continues or skin is breaking, shorten or stop the activity.

British weather changes the problem

Rain can soak fabric, while waterproof layers can hold heat and sweat close to the body. Carrying a dry pair of socks, a lightweight layer and a small skin-care kit can be more useful than relying on one clothing system for the whole day.

Small kit, big difference

Carry	Why
Dry socks or base layer	Replaces moisture-laden fabric
Soft cloth or tissue	Allows gentle patting rather than rubbing
Your tested anti-chafe product	Supports planned reapplication if needed
Small plaster/dressing kit	Protects minor accidental abrasions until you can stop

After activity: calm the routine down

Post-activity care should be gentle. The skin may be more sensitive than it looks, especially after heat, long duration or wet conditions.

✓	Change out of wet clothing promptly.
✓	Wash gently with lukewarm water. Avoid aggressive scrubbing or heavily fragranced products on irritated areas.
✓	Pat dry. NHS guidance for friction-prone skin repeatedly favours gentle drying rather than rubbing.
✓	Give the area air and time. Choose loose, soft clothing while the skin settles.
✓	Moisturise dry, intact skin if appropriate. Stop using any product that causes burning, stinging or increased redness.

When self-care is not enough

This guide is for prevention and everyday skin comfort. Seek advice from a pharmacist, GP or NHS 111 if you are unsure what you are seeing, symptoms are worsening, or the area is not settling.

GET PROMPT MEDICAL ADVICE

Do so if skin is extensively broken or blistered, pain is increasing, redness is spreading, there is discharge, or you feel hot, cold, shivery or generally unwell. These can be signs that the problem needs clinical assessment.

Important

SLIPSTREAM products are cosmetic skin-care products. They are not medicines and are not intended to diagnose, treat or cure a medical condition. Do not apply to broken skin unless the product instructions expressly permit it. Patch test before first use and stop if irritation occurs.

Your one-minute chafing plan

✓	MAP: Where have I rubbed before?
✓	MATCH: Is today's clothing and equipment suitable for the distance and weather?
✓	PREPARE: Is my skin clean, dry and intact, and have I applied my tested product correctly?
✓	NOTICE: What is my earliest warning signal?
✓	ACT: Will I stop and adjust before discomfort becomes damage?
✓	REVIEW: What should I change before the next session?

Trusted resources

For further independent guidance:

- [England Athletics / RunTogether - preventing running chafing](#)
- [British Cycling - avoiding saddle soreness](#)
- [NHS - recognising concerning skin symptoms](#)
- [NHS - skin care and when to seek professional advice](#)

THE SIMPLE PRINCIPLE

Reduce rubbing. Manage moisture. Prepare known hot spots. Respond early. Give sore skin time to recover.

SLIPSTREAM® KNOWLEDGE CENTRE

Practical guidance for active living - education first, products second.

Stay Comfortable.

Prepared August 2026. Information is general and does not replace advice from a pharmacist, GP or other qualified healthcare professional.