

THE NEWRY CLINIC



The Newry Clinic has three partners - Stephen Brannigan, Frank Quinn and Kieran Murray, who are highly experienced Chartered Physiotherapists and have previously worked in the Premiership and Rugby League. They are the current Physios to the Down Senior Gaelic Football Team.

Kinesio Taping – Injury solution or fashion statement?

WHEN you see a player on the field with bright white boots and hair bleached just as white, you ask yourself, is this person mentally stable or not?



coloured option also which, for some reason is rarely used.

Apparently the colour variations are for therapeutic reasons but it certainly has been a great marketing tool as it draws great attention to the tape. Lance Armstrong described his experience of Kinesio Tape as being 'so wrapped up that we'd look like dolls!' Kinesio Taping is relatively new in Gaelic games but it has been around for over 25 years. The tape itself is not exactly revolutionary. It is sticky and elastic. The manufacturers claim the secret is in the application of the tape. Stretched tape is placed in the desired area of skin so that when the tape recoils from its stretched position, it lifts the skin. The Theory is that this allows improved flow of blood and lymph fluid, hence improved

Taping an injury may help for rehab purposes

Similarly when you see a player with strips of bright blue or pink tape strategically placed up and down the leg, you ask yourself if this is some sort of new fashion statement or has this player just come from a charity waxing event where they couldn't get the last strip of wax off!

A new development in the field of sports physiotherapy has seen Kinesio Taping become more prevalent in our games. Kinesio Tape is a form of taping where you may see a single strip of tape placed along the line of a muscle, eg. hamstring, in an attempt to alleviate pain or discomfort in that area.

The designers of this tape have decided to manufacture it in bright colours such as blue or pink (there is a flesh



If you have a bad injury, no amount of tape will help you play

muscle function. Using certain techniques, the tape can also be used to relax overactive muscle or facilitate contraction of weak, under active muscles. Like I said before, in the world of physiotherapy, none of these theories are completely new treatment options for the therapist.

Any therapist with good taping skills already uses techniques for relaxation or facilitation of muscle activity, restriction of joint movement and blood/lymph drainage. The founders of this particular technique seem to be basing their sales pitch on the fact that it allows an athlete continued participation in his/her chosen sports.

This, Kinesio say, is because of the ability of their tape to conform with the skin even in sweaty conditions and hence maintain the function of the tape throughout that particular event.

The big question the physiotherapist must ask themselves is, if a player requires taping to protect an injury then, are they fit enough to be playing in the first place?

In my opinion, in high intensity sport, the muscle forces



Kinesio tape comes in many colours, a clever marketing ploy

produced are too strong to be influenced by any tape. Taping for restriction of movement of a joint is acceptable as long as enough mobility is maintained to allow the joint to function properly.

If a player has a strain of a muscle or tendon then tape is not going to be sufficient to allow that player to play pain-free.

I am not totally against Kinesio theories in taping but I think that they will be more beneficially used in rehabilitation of a problem rather than allowing someone to continue to play. Taping an injury to play means that the injury is still present or the player has no confidence in an old injury or possibly, both of the above.

Kinesio tape was used widely during the last Olympic Games but in athletics the movements are much more uni-directional and avoid the element of physical contact.

Aside from using Kinesio Taping in the rehabilitation phase of an injury, I think the benefits which come from allowing someone to play are more psychological than physiological.



Beckham and Serena Williams have both been pictured with Kinesio tape

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