

## FRACTURED RIBS OR STAINED INTERCOSTAL MUSCLES



Recently a member of my staff was hit by a car as she walked across a road. Among other injuries, she fractured a rib. Once she was hospitalized, her specialist gave me permission to strap the injured area.

Firstly, she was strapped using Leukotape K 75mm. The arm was abducted as much as possible without pain and “finger” strapping applied in order to increase drainage of soft tissue exudate – **Figure 1**

With the patient inhaling as much as pain would allow, this strapping was placed on the skin using no tension at all with the centre of the crossed tape over the fractured rib. This tape remained on her skin for 48 hours.

**Leukotape K 50mm was then applied as follows – Figure 2:**

1. The arm was abducted as much as possible without pain.
2. With a 75% stretch of the middle 2/3rds of the tape, the horizontal strip was placed over the fracture site.
3. As the tape was put on the skin, slightly inward tension was used making sure that no pain was elicited.

4. With the patient inhaling as much as pain would allow, the ends of the tape were placed on the skin with  
  
no tension. The aims of the tape were to increase space above the injured rib thus increasing the blood  
  
supply to the area, increasing drainage and consequently decreasing pain. This taping technique also  
  
provided stability while the proprioceptive factor also assists in pain relief.
5. If the injured area had been larger, two parallel horizontal strips would have been applied.
6. With the patient inhaling as much as pain would allow, two strips were then placed vertically on either  
  
side of the injured area.
7. The middle 2/3rds of the tape had a 75% stretch and the ends were put onto the skin with no tension.
8. The tape remained on the skin for one week and was then reapplied.

Please forward any queries or comments with respect to injuries, techniques or Leuko products to [askleuko@bsnmedical.com](mailto:askleuko@bsnmedical.com) for advice from the Leuko Strapping Panel, who are members of the South African Society of Physiotherapy. Selected questions will be loaded onto the BSN Medical website [www.bsnmedical.co.za](http://www.bsnmedical.co.za) for reference purposes.

### **Refer to the Leuko Strapping Guide for basic guidelines.**

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