

Guide for the use of TENS

Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation (TENS) is a little battery-operated machine that delivers a small and painless current of electricity through pads (electrodes) that are attached to your skin.

You feel the electrical current as a vibration or pins and needles.

The TENS pads are placed on your skin to surround the area of your pain. The vibration that the TENS machine produces stops some of the pain signals.

Pain is felt when the brain receives a signal from a part of our body that hurts. This signal travels along the nerves, up the spinal cord to the brain.

Your pain doctor has recommended you try a TENS machine to help with your pain.

Contact information

Pain Management Service

Chelsea and Westminster Hospital
369 Fulham Road
London
SW10 9NH

T: 020 3315 8076

E: chelseapaincentre@chelwest.nhs.uk

Notes

Patient Advice & Liaison Service (PALS)

If you have concerns or wish to give feedback about services, your care or treatment, you can contact the PALS office on the Ground Floor of the hospital just behind the main reception.

Alternatively, you can send us your comments or suggestions on one of our comment cards, available at the PALS office, or on a feedback form on our website www.chelwest.nhs.uk/pals.

We value your opinion and invite you to provide us with feedback.

T: 020 3315 6727

E: cwpals@chelwest.nhs.uk

Chelsea and Westminster Hospital

369 Fulham Road
London
SW10 9NH

T: 020 3315 8000

W: www.chelwest.nhs.uk

February 2016

العربية • বাংলা • Español • فارسی
Lietuviškai • Polska • Português
Русский • Soomaali • አማርኛ

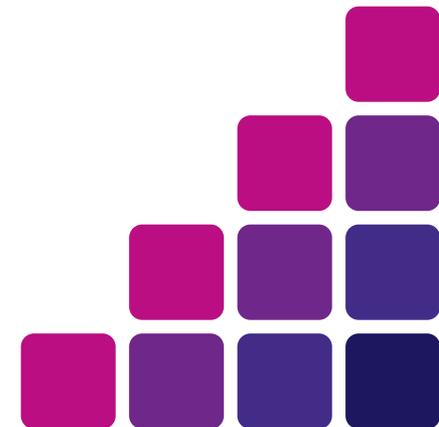
Speak to your clinician



Chelsea and Westminster Hospital **NHS**
NHS Foundation Trust

Guide for the use of TENS

Information for patients



Benefits of TENS

TENS is not a cure but can help you to manage your pain. It is simple to use and once you have been shown how to use it, it is a device that you can take home and use in your everyday life.

What happens during my TENS appointment?

You will either be seen as an individual or as part of a group at your appointment. During this time the Pain Management Nurse Specialist will explain the TENS machine to you and show you how best to use it for your pain. Please bring a list of your current medications with you and wear loose clothing (skirt/trousers and a top).

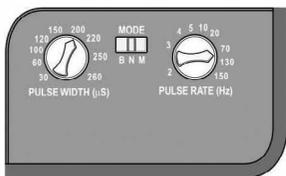
How do I operate the TENS machine?

Make sure the machine is switched off before you start. Plug the leads into the pads (electrodes) and attach the leads to the machine. Position the pads on to clean, dry skin. Switch the machine on and turn up the intensity until the sensation is a strong but comfortable.

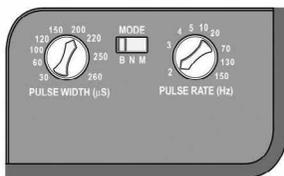
The front cover of the machine slides down. It looks like the pictures below. The battery is also located here which you will need to replace depending on how regularly you use the machine.

- **N (normal mode):** The width (duration) should be set at 200 and the rate (frequency) at 80–100.
- **B (burst mode):** The width (duration) should be set at 200 and the rate (frequency) at 2.

N (normal mode)



B (burst mode)

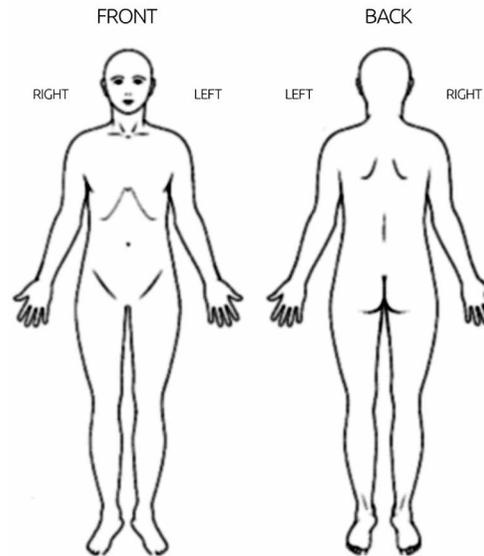


Where do I place the electrodes?

Place the pads on the areas of your body which you were shown in the clinic. The aim is to surround the area of your pain.

Always place the pads at least one pads width apart and if using regularly, for long periods of time, change the positioning of the pads to give areas a break from stimulation.

Please shade on the diagram below the location of your pain and also mark with an arrow on the diagram the one place your pain that is the worst for you. Subsequently, place the pads on the areas on the diagram below which you were shown in the clinic as a reminder of where to place the pads.



What sort of problems might I experience?

- If you experience low or no sensation then replace the battery.
- If you experience burning sensation under the pads, they may be worn out or the intensity may be too high. Try replacing the pads and turn the intensity down (using the knobs on top of the machine).

- If the TENS machine has a loose or broken wire then contact the pain clinic for help.
- If you develop a rash or reddened area you may need to change the position of the pads.

The pads (electrodes) become less sticky over time and with use, therefore you can purchase new ones from a chemist/pharmacy or over the internet.

What do I do when I want to stop using the machine?

Switch it off first and then remove the pads and disconnect them. Then place the pads on the clear plastic backing which is stored in the sealed plastic bag.

If you are using the TENS machine several times a day you need only disconnect the leads and leave the pads on. Store the machine safely when you are not using it.

Precautions

Do not use TENS:

- If you have a pacemaker
- If you have broken infected skin in the area you are placing the TENS pads
- Over the front or sides of the neck
- If you are pregnant, seek medical advice

Do	Don't
Try and use regularly during the daytime	Use in the bath/shower
Apply electrodes to surround area of pain	Use while driving/operating machinery
Aim for a strong but comfortable sensation	Apply electrodes over front neck/chest
Monitor the area where the electrodes are placed for irritation/burns	Lend to anyone else, including children
	Apply to broken skin