

## What are they?

**Binder:** a compression vest or shirt that is used to flatten or smooth out a person's chest.



**Bra insert:** a soft and squishy prosthetic used to add volume to a person's chest. Usually, bra inserts (and their bigger equivalent "Breast Forms") need to be secured with a bra, adhesive, or snug top.



**Gaff:** compression underwear used to flatten or smooth out a person's pelvic area (crotch).



**Packer:** a soft and squishy prosthetic used to add volume to a person's crotch. Usually, packers are shaped like flaccid penises and balls, and need to be secured in place with a pack strap, waist band, or snug pair of briefs.



**STP:** stands for "stand to pee" and includes a variety of devices to help people with a shorter urethra, especially people with vulvas, to pee standing up. This can be handy while using a urinal, at a festival, during watersports, or just to write your name in the snow!



## Why do people use these things?

It's different for each person! For some, this can be to cope with feelings of dissonance or dysphoria towards sex characteristics. For others, it could be that an illness or medical intervention has altered their body (e.g. mastectomy from breast cancer, testicular cancer). It might also be so that certain clothes fit better.

These items can be used to play with gender expression, too! Drag performers, cosplayers, and cross-dressers frequently use them. What is a tool or prosthetic for one person can be a sex toy or fashion piece for others.

## Why not just get surgery?

Some people definitely need and want surgeries to feel at home in their bodies. However, many don't want them, others might not be able to afford them, or even be physically able to undergo certain surgeries. Some people might use them because it's the best things they can get for now. Others still are genderfabulous shapeshifters who appreciate the temporary nature of stuff like binders, gaffs, bra inserts, and packers.

## Safety first!

Too tight? Some materials should not be used to bind your chest. Ace bandages and tape constrict your ribs and affect your breathing. They can bruise you and cause damage which can be painful and dangerous. Check out our "binder caresheet" for more information on binder care and safety.

Wearing binders and gaffs too long can affect the elasticity of your skin.

## Tips and Tricks

Your boobs and/or dick fell on the floor? When trying out a bra insert or packer at home, try moving around to see how secured they are. Knowing things will stay in place can make you more confident!

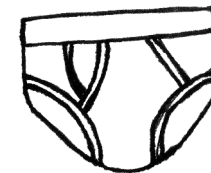
**Caring for your stuff :** Packers and bra inserts can get sticky. If they are made of silicone, you can wash them with soap and water. Jelly or cyberskin can be washed and, after air drying, dusted with cornstarch to keep moisture away from your body.



Nylon pack straps, binders, and gaffs should be hand washed and hung to dry. Using a dryer will degrade the elastic.

Ch-ch-ch-changes! If you have recently made changes to your diet, exercise regime, or hormone levels, your weight and muscle mass might shift around. A binder or gaff that fit well four months ago might be too small or too big now! Listen to your body for signs of pain and try your best to give it breaks when possible. Your skin will thank you.

Treat those bits with respect! Since many people use these items to feel more at home in their bodies, best to treat them as an extension of their "homes" and not touch them without asking – whether currently attached to them or not.



And remember: all bodies are different, and what makes one person uncomfortable with their body can be empowering and beautiful for another!

## Pay it forward! #giveagaff #buyabinder

It can be pretty hard to find gaffs, binders, bra inserts, and packers that fit our needs without spending a lot of money. A lot of people who experience gender dissonance or dysphoria notice they have much lower levels of anxiety and discomfort when they have access to these things. We are working with communities to help folks access what they need to feel more at home in their bodies. If you'd like to access this program or contribute to it, check out: [www.venusenvy.ca/Ottawa/pay-it-forward](http://www.venusenvy.ca/Ottawa/pay-it-forward)

### Resources:

**Binder care sheet and Gender 101** : available for download at [www.venusenvy.ca/sex\\_ed/articles/](http://www.venusenvy.ca/sex_ed/articles/)

Cameron, E. and Behnke, R. **Your friendly neighborhood binding safety guide**  
<http://www.idontdoboxes.org/your-friendly-neighborhood-binding-safety-guide/>

**How to Stand to Pee With A Device**  
<http://www.wikihow.com/Stand-to-Pee-With-a-Device>

**How to wear bras when you don't have breasts.**  
<https://questfortheperfectbra.wordpress.com/2014/04/14/how-to-wear-bras-when-you-dont-have-breasts/> (2014)

Tourjee, D. **How to Tuck.**  
[https://broadly.vice.com/en\\_us/article/how-to-tuck](https://broadly.vice.com/en_us/article/how-to-tuck) (2015)

Riverdale, J. **The Packer Showdown.**  
<http://transguys.com/product-reviews/packers> (2009)



Venus Envy is an education oriented sex shop and bookstore with stores in Ottawa and Halifax. Our goal is to provide everyone with a respectful (and fun!) place where they can find toys and tools to explore gender and sexuality.

We believe that one of the best tools to enjoying a healthy and satisfying sex life is knowledge. To that end, we offer our pamphlets series as a way for people to access information even if you're too shy to ask one of us at the shop! You are welcome to download and print any of these pamphlets to share with lovers, friends, clients, or anyone else!

Our goal is to make sex positive and accurate information available to everybody. Our pamphlets offer an introduction to many facets of sex and sexual health and are always evolving. We recognize that language can be limiting and that people have a variety of ways of describing their bits. We've chosen to use medical terms for clarity, but understand that these terms don't work for everyone. We welcome any comments and suggestions that you may have.

# venus envy

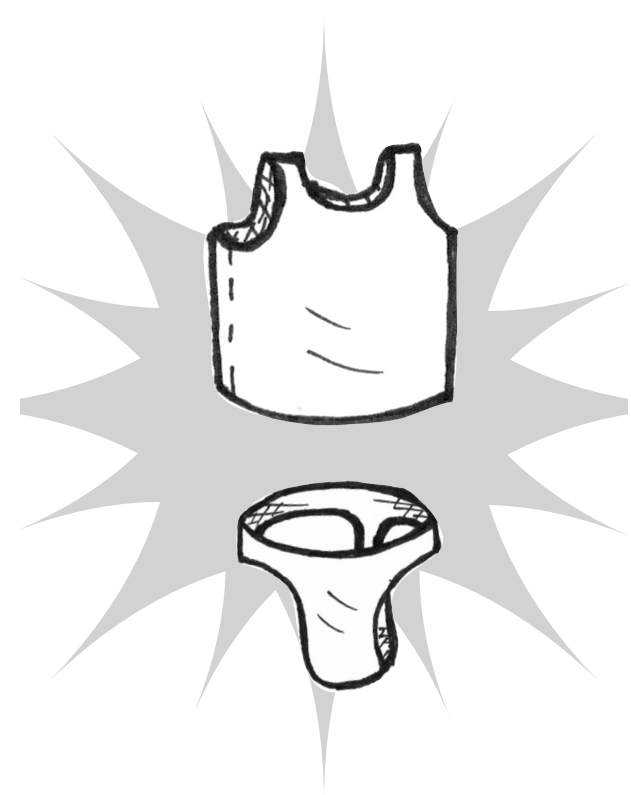
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## Gaffs & Binders



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