



# How to Care for Minor Abrasions and Scratches

Expert  
Reviewed

Two Parts: [Cleaning Your Scrape or Abrasion](#) [Dressing Your Wound](#)

You can get minor abrasions and scratches throughout your daily life. Falling from your bike might result in a scraped knee. Grazing your elbow on a rough surface could result in an abrasion. These wounds do not break your skin and generally are not very serious. You can treat them easily at home with a few basic care methods.<sup>[1]</sup>

## Part 1 1 Cleaning Your Scrape or Abrasion

**1 Wash your hands with soap and water.** Before you start treating your or another person's wound, clean your hands with warm water and soap. If you are treating another person, put on disposable gloves.<sup>[2]</sup> Try to have non-latex gloves on hand because some people have latex allergies.

- Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds and dry them on a clean towel.

**2 Stop any bleeding.** If your scratch or abrasion is still bleeding, apply gentle pressure to it with a clean cloth or cotton swab. Elevate the injured body part to help stop bleeding.<sup>[3]</sup> The bleeding should cease after a few minutes. If not, your scratch is likely more serious and you should visit a doctor.

**3 Wash your scrape or abrasion.** Clean your injury with fresh water and soap. You can use a clean cloth as well.<sup>[4]</sup> Try to remove any visible dirt. Be gentle so that you do not cause further injury.

- You might need to use sterilized tweezers to remove any ingrained dirt. If you cannot reach all the dirt or other objects, see your physician.<sup>[5]</sup>
- You should not apply harsh substances like iodine or hydrogen peroxide. These products can hurt your skin.<sup>[6]</sup> Avoid applying alcohol directly to wounds as well.

## Part 2 2 Dressing Your Wound

**1 Use an antibiotic ointment.** After you have cleaned your wound, use a small amount of antibiotic cream on the the wound. Polysporin or Neosporin are good choices. These products work to fight infection and assist recovery.<sup>[7]</sup>

- Quit applying antibiotic ointments if you develop a rash.<sup>[8]</sup>

**2 Apply a bandage.** To protect your scrape from infection, put on a sterile bandage. You do not need to do this if your scrape is minor. For example, if your skin is merely grazed, you likely do not need a bandage. In fact, keeping a wound uncovered can make the healing process go faster.<sup>[9]</sup>

**3 Switch bandages regularly.** If you apply a bandage to your wound, change it when it becomes wet or soiled. Minimally, apply a new bandage once daily. Once your scrape has scabbed or otherwise healed, apply no more bandages. Giving it access to fresh air will help it heal faster.<sup>[10]</sup>

**4 Watch for infection.** If your wound appears to be infected, see a doctor. Signs of infection include swelling, redness, a warm wound, oozing of fluids, or escalating pain.<sup>[11]</sup> Watch additionally for red lines around the scrape or a fever.<sup>[12]</sup>

## Community Q&A

### How do I prevent scarring from a dog nail scratch that broke the skin?

wikiHow  
Contributor

First, check to see how deep the wound is. If it is deep, you may need stitches. Otherwise, clean the wound, and keep it moist under a bandage. Do not use falsely advertised scar creams that do not work, -- just stick with antibacterial wound ointment such as Neosporin. Change the bandage once or twice every day. Avoid the sun and dry areas. Gently massage around the wound. After a while, take the bandage off of the wound and let it heal naturally, applying ointment to keep it moist. Do not pick at it.

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