

The Stretching Guide

Jewelry-

Wearing quality jewelry is one of the most important parts of the stretching journey.

The best material(s) for stretching first and foremost are “Single-Flare Glass Plugs” or just glass jewelry in general; while single flare implant grade Titanium and Niobium are safe to use it is important to get it from a trusted maker/seller to ensure the grade labeled is true to the product. Acrylic, silicone, cheap metal, double-flared as well as natural (e.g., wood, stone, horn) jewelry should **never** be used to stretch piercings let alone in freshly pierced flesh. Here’s why!

Acrylic: Materials like acrylic are quite easily scratched and dented even in packaging which can lead to irritation, and while acrylic is sold as jewelry it is not currently available in a biocompatible or “medical grade” version(s) in the jewelry trade, this means it is hard to know the actual quality and with all the additives to cheapen the product which worst case scenario can leach these chemicals out of the jewelry. This makes them a poor choice in all scenarios.

Cheap Metals: Cheap metal jewelry can be safely presumed to be low quality, either being low polished, coated in low quality metals or just not the proper grade in general. This can lead to swelling and irritation in most cases. If you are going to choose to wear cheap or low-grade jewelry it is important to be sure the area is fully healed beforehand.

Silicone: In this case there is a medical grade silicone jewelry provider, Kaos Soft Wear. Silicone is a poor choice for stretching as it can easily lead to micro-tears, blowouts, irritation, and infection. High-grade silicone is an excellent choice for healed piercings and after stretching has healed but not during either process.

Natural Materials: These materials include wood, horn, stone, bamboo, and bone. Though these materials surpass many types of jewelry in aesthetics they make a poor choice to stretch with and for initial piercings due to their porousness. This aids in trapping bacteria which of course can lead to infections and irritation, having this happen during a stretch or initial piercing can make for a poor experience which is why it is only recommended to wear these pieces in properly healed areas.

We always recommend buying your jewelry from a well-known manufacturer. Here are some quality jewelry manufacturers:

- [Anometal](#)
- [Industrial Strength](#)
- [NeoMetal](#)
- [Glasswear Studios](#)

- [Gorilla Glass](#)

Why Glass Single-Flare Plugs?-

Single-flare glass plugs are the best choice due to having a gentle tapered end making insertion of the jewelry easy and comfortable. Being extremely smooth, non-porous, weighing less than other metal jewelry and with the ability to be autoclaved. These factors make it an excellent choice for stretching and fresh piercings alike!

O-Rings-

O-rings are regularly available in Nitrile and Silicone. Though usually safe, some people may have allergies to either of these materials. Signs of an allergy from your O-ring will usually result in redness or itchiness at the location of the O-ring, but it's important to note not to confuse an allergies irritation with your ears not being ready to stretch as blowouts usually result in the days to come and not so much immediately after stretching.

People who do use O-rings can often have trouble keeping them on, whether it be while sleeping or throughout the day, but there is an alternative! The [X-Ring - Nitrile No-Roll O-Rings](#). These O-rings stay where you need them much better than normal O-rings... Unfortunately, they only come in sizes from 8g to 1"(25mm)

Stretching Basics-

Keeping your Piercings Healthy:

Lubrication is necessary when stretching and with everyday maintenance/care. The products below are particularly good for keeping your lobes healthy & moisturized and when mixed with beeswax, they will work for twice as long!

- [Jojoba Oil](#)
- [Coconut Oil](#)
- [Avocado Oil](#)
- [Emu Oil](#)
- [Raw Cocoa Butter](#)

- [Vitamin E oil](#)

Always keep your lobes well lubricated!

Especially when inserting jewelry! This helps keep your skin happy and healthy, along with this the process of massaging the area is also beneficial in itself!

-How to Make "Ear Butter"

It is incredibly simple to make your own ear butter.

For the ear butter you will need the following ingredients:

- [Coconut Oil = 1 TBSP](#)
- [Vitamin E Oil = 1 TBSP](#)
- [Jojoba Oil = 1 TBSP](#)
- [Raw Organic Cocoa Butter = 1 TBSP](#)
- [Emu Oil \(AEA Certified Always\) = 1 TBSP](#)
- [Organic Beeswax = 1 TBSP for a soft "butter," or 2 TBSP for a firmer mix](#)

Instructions:

- You will need two pots, a large pot filled with water, and a small pot to set inside the larger pot which will float on top of the water. This is how you make a double boiler.
- 1. Place pots on stove, on Low heat.
- 2. Add all ingredients to a small pot.
- 3. Slowly allow all the ingredients to melt together.
- 4. Stir thoroughly & pour into small mason jar or other container and allow to cool at room temperature.
- When cooled, it should be creamy to slightly firm depending on the amount of beeswax you decide to use. If it is too hard for your liking, melt mixture back down and add more oils. If it is too soft add more beeswax.

When you're stretching your ears and the area has healed, it's important while practicing oiling and massaging them to also practice being without them. This helps promote a healthier lobe by helping with circulation and prevention of thinning. However, some people may not be able to leave their plugs out for long periods of time but the point is to allow your lobes to rest each day while still being able to gently insert your jewelry again after said period of time.

There are of course exceptions such as when you are planning to stretch or have recently stretched already. **You should be leaving your jewelry in while you sleep two to four weeks before and after stretching** but should still be removed for about an hour after showering or cleaning once a day and massage and lubricate your lobes. While your lobes are initially stretching try not to sleep on them and instead sleep on your back if possible or use a specially made pillow like a travel pillow.

- [Ear Piercing Pillow](#)

If you happen to have had a blowout that has healed and are trying to reduce the “cat-butt” look, lubricating, and massaging your lobes three times a day may prove to be beneficial, as well, downsizing, may prove beneficial and may also help thicken lobes!

How to stretch your Piercings:

When on your stretching journey patience is a virtue!

The longer you wait in-between stretching your newly loved piercing the better the results! Below is an **approximate** timeline you can follow for soft tissue such as earlobes.

Remember when in doubt, wait longer.

The following is the approximate time needed to wait in-between stretching softer tissue:

1. Fresh Piercing 6+ months
2. 14g-12g 1+ month
3. 12g-10g 1.5+ months
4. 10g-8g 2+ months
5. 8g-6g 3+ months
6. 6g-4g 3+ month
7. 4g-2g 3+ months
8. 2g-1g(7mm) 4+ months
9. 1g-0g(8mm) 4+ months
10. 0g-0g(9mm) 4+ months

When it comes to piercings located in cartilage and or other thicker tissues it is recommended to **double** the table above. Remember this is just an estimation.

To reiterate these are just general approximations. It is important to note that **some people may need to go slower**. It can be VERY hard to tell if you are going too fast sometimes. Stretching is not a race. The question should **never** be "How fast can I go?" But rather: "How *slow* should I go to avoid doing any damage."

Everyone's body is different, the same goes for various locations of the body and stretching them. The smaller the increase in size the safer the stretch will be. You should never stretch more than 1mm at a time especially since it's become quite easy to acquire glass plugs in 1.0mm and even 0.5mm increments. You can find incremental jewelry sizes here:

- [Gorilla Glass .5mm Plugs](#)
- [Nirvana Glass .5mm Plugs](#)
- [Arctic Buffalo Glass 1mm Plugs](#)

-**Dead Stretching** is the process of using single-flare plugs of proper material and simply inserting it into the piercing at a slightly larger size than currently worn once the fresh piercing or previously stretched area is healed fully. You will see a gap between your skin and the jewelry when pulled lightly away. This indicates you are ready for the next size. Dead stretching should **not** be done with double-flared plugs as the flare is usually another 1-2mm wider in diameter than the size you are ordering. **If you ever feel tingling sensations, burning, pain, or any other sensation after stretching, downsize immediately.**

-**Taping** is the process of using of using PTFE tape to gradually go up in size over time. **Bondage tape is also used but is not recommended** due to it being almost two times as thick and over twice as wide. With this method you would start using this at larger sizes 0g(8mm)+ when you are healed from your last stretch and you start to have a small gap that won't stretch up to the next size. You would wrap it around your jewelry about two times, lubricate your ears and insert the jewelry. You would then wait the usual amount of time for the stretch to heal and proceed to the next available jewelry size. This method, though not as safe as dead stretching, is sometimes needed, that being said, the taping method can be more of a pain as you should be changing the tape daily to keep it clean which means removing the tape and rewrapping. To make this easier you could use a decent quality caliper to check the size of the jewelry with the tape after wrapping. Taping should be used as a last resort of sorts for people who have waited the appropriate amount of time but still can't get to that next size. It is also used to help facilitate the stretching of cartilage in even smaller increments than 0.5mm. **If you ever feel tingling sensations, burning, pain, or any other sensation after stretching, downsize immediately.**

-**Weights** are an addition or replacement of heavier piece(s) of jewelry that can be used in numerous ways. Weights should always be **avoided** with new and freshly stretched piercings. Lighter weight can be used to help facilitate stretching in the form of stone plugs or the addition of Captive Bead or Seamless Rings, these small increments of weight can help get you to that next little step but it is important when using hanging weights to really keep track of how much they weigh. For example, a Rose Quartz 25mm double-flare plug weighs about 18grams, a 0g 5/8" steel captive bead ring weighs about 31grams, hanging weights can be found at about 6-50grams but knowing this also consider that instead of the weight being distributed more so properly like when we wear our plugs, hanging weights will be constantly pulling downward on the same spot of the ear which can lead to the thinning of the area and irritation. It's important when considering hanging weights to use them temporarily about 2-4 hours a day. Even heavier stone and extra rings through tunnels should be used in moderation, any excess weight pulling on a specific area can cause thinning if you leave it in long enough. **If you ever feel tingling sensations, burning, pain, or any other sensation after stretching, downsize immediately.**

-**Tapers**(traditionally) should realistically be considered an instrument rather than a piece of jewelry. Tapers can cause (and often do) severe damage before you realize what has happened and this also includes tapered jewelry. This includes pinchers and those nice intricate glass and wood spiral

pieces. This is due to the very gradual increase in size which makes it easier to insert larger jewelry before the area is ready causing blowouts, tears, and infection. It's also important to not wear these spiral types of jewelry to bed as they can get stuck in blankets and pillows!

Using tapers to stretch **is extremely discouraged** in most scenarios though there are some exceptions, being cartilage and other tougher tissue areas(e.g., upper ear, septums, some genital areas). Even though this is the case and stretching these areas is quite different than the standard earlobe it is still recommended to go slow, use half sizes, and be aware of **how these areas should feel** when stretching. Like any other piercings you can still cause blowouts, tears, and infection. If this is a new journey for you, it is **STRONGLY** recommended to see a piercer to stretch these areas for you the first few times to figure out how it should be done and feel. **If you ever feel tingling sensations, burning, pain, or any other sensation after stretching, downsize immediately.**

- [Proper Tapering set w/ in-between sizes](#)
- Snap Plug Stretching [Kit 4g-0g, 0g-1/2"](#)

Snap-Plugs are a not mentioned very often now adays but are a safer alternative to tapers when/where they can be applied. These plugs snap together in small increments, more so than tapers. For example tapers in mm starting from 4g-0g would be 5, 5.5, 6, 7, 8mm. whereas the snap-plugs from 4g-0g would consist of ten steps making it less likely for blowouts or tears when of course used properly.

Stretching Cartilage and Other Areas:

When considering stretching cartilage and other tougher areas it's important to note that this is quite a different experience than stretching tissue like the standard earlobe. As mentioned above, healing and stretching time is about doubled when it comes to healing and stretching tougher areas whether it be septums, upper portions of the ear or even genital piercings like the apadravya. If you plan to stretch these areas you should consider how large you want to go with your stretching journey.

If you only plan to go up a couple sizes from the initial piercing, stretching over time is definitely feasible where others who may want to go larger may consider a larger needle gauge or even get it done with a dermal/biopsy punch, area dependent. When it comes to these piercings it's always recommended when stretching to see your piercer to make sure this is done properly even if only to get a feeling of how it is supposed to go. Stretching these areas even when going about it properly you can and usually will experience some slight pain and there after redness along with tenderness in the area.

Just the same, stretching these areas should never involve bleeding, swelling, consistent sharp pain, and shouldn't feel tender for more than a week or so depending on the person and location. **It should be done slowly, and with respect.** Most of you have at least witnessed what happens when ears blowout and the damage improper taper use can cause, adding that experience to cartilage or other tougher areas and you can see why we are so strict with how/when tapers should be used.

Gauge and Sizes:

Once you reach about 2g you should realistically ignore “gauge” sizes as well as fractions of an inch and focus on using millimeters (mm). You can get yourself a decent caliper to measure your jewelry diameter as well as its overall and wearable area to be sure youre receiving and ordering the correct products.

- [Quality Digital Caliper](#)

Remember: It's Not a Race! Be Safe!

* I do not claim to be a professional piercer nor do I work in the body modification industry. If you are a professional and there are any improvements which could be made to this guide, PLEASE message me!