TEFILIN

TEFILIN: MITZVA

Tefilin: Torah Mitzva

Have in mind that you are doing a *mitzva* of the *Torah* while putting on *tefilin*.

TEFILIN: HOLINESS

TEFILIN: HOLINESS: TEFILIN STRAPS

When Tefilin Straps Become Holy

The straps on *tefilin* become holy objects once they have been used.

TEFILIN: HOLINESS: TEFILIN BOXES

Tefilin: Holiness: Head and Arm Tefilin Boxes

The box for holding the head *tefila* (*tefila shel rosh*) has a higher level of holiness than does the box for holding the arm *tefila* (*tefila shel yad*). You may not intentionally switch the boxes.

Tefilin: Holiness: Switching Boxes by Mistake

If you inadvertently put the arm *tefila* (*tefila shel yad)* into the box for the *tefila shel rosh*, take it out and put it into its proper box.

TEFILIN: HOW TO PUT ON

Arm Tefila: How To Put On

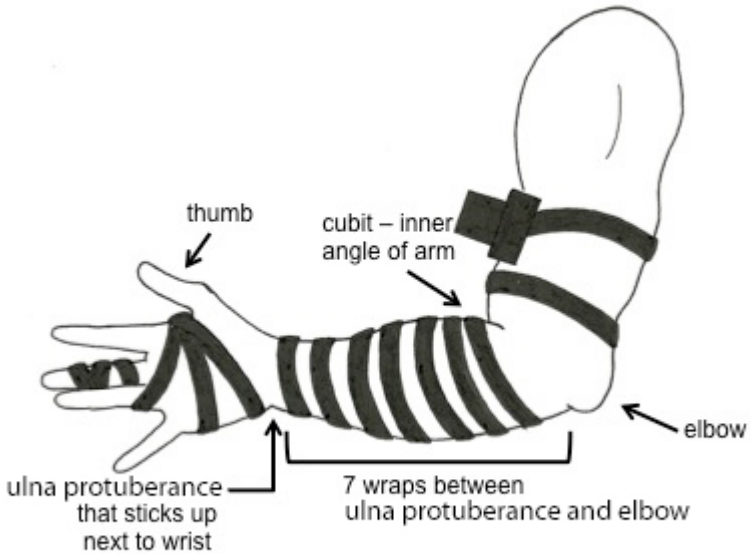
1. Place arm *tefila* box (*bayit*) on center of bicep of whichever arm you do not write with (knot on the arm *tefila* should touch the side of the box). If you are ambidextrous, put the *tefila* on your left arm.
2. Say the first blessing, "*lehaniach tefilin.*"
3. Tighten the strap.
4. Wrap the strap around your arm seven times between your cubit (inside of your arm, opposite the elbow) and your wrist.

   NOTE If you wrap more times, it is OK.

   NOTE You may wrap the *tefilin* strap over a wristwatch or put a watch on top of the *tefilin* strap.

   NOTE *Tefilin* straps should not overlap with each other and should not be wrapped on top of the ulna protuberance, but if they do--it is permitted.

5. Wrap the excess around the palm of your hand (tuck in the end to keep it tight and out of the way).



Tefilin

Head Tefila: How To Put On

1. Place the *tefila* on your head tightly enough so it does not slip off under normal motion.
2. Center the head *tefila* box on your forehead (as it appears to an average person. There is no need to look in a mirror.)
3. Place the head *tefila* box with its front edge above your hairline (or where your hairline was when you were 13!), not further back than half-way on your skull from front to back.
4. Ideally, place the knot at the back on your occipital bone (base of your skull), but you may place it lower as long as it is still on top of your hair.
5. Say the second blessing, *al mitzvat tefilin*.
6. Tighten the *tefila* on your head and say, *Baruch shem kevod malchuto l'olam va'ed*

REASON "*Al mitzvat tefilin*" is a questionable blessing (*safek bracha*).
NOTE *Tefilin* head straps should reach at least to your navel (left strap) and *mila* (right strap).

Arm Tefila: How To Finish

- Unwrap the excess strap from your palm and wrap it three times around your middle finger while saying the three "*v'eirastich li*" phrases, one for each wrap.
- Wrap the strap around your palm in the shape of the *Hebrew* letter "*shin.*"
- Wrap the excess around your palm and tuck in the end of the strap to keep it tight and out of your way.

NOTE You may not say *amen* or reply to *kaddish* or *kedusha* if you have said the blessing on your arm *tefila* but have not yet said the blessing on your head *tefila*.

Tefilin: Left-Handed Men

Left-handed men must put *tefilin* on their right arm.

Tefilin: Broken Arm

Even with a broken arm, do not switch the arm on which you wrap your *tefilin*.

NOTE If your (normally) weaker arm becomes permanently stronger than the other arm, switch to wearing *tefilin* on the newly weaker arm.

TEFILIN: FALLEN

Tefilin: Fallen: Fast

If *tefilin* without their covers on fall onto the ground, the custom is to fast for one day. If the covers are on the *tefilin*, there is no custom to fast.

TEFILIN: ADJUSTING OR REPLACING

TEFILIN: ADJUSTING

Tefilin: Adjusting: Saying Blessing

If you adjust your *tefilin*, do not say the blessing again.

TEFILIN: REPLACING

Tefilin: Replacing: Tefilin You Had To Take Off or That Fell Off

If you take off your *tefilin* because you have to, such as to go to the bathroom, or if one or both of the *tefilin* fall or slide off your arm or head, say:

- Both blessings again when you replace the head *tefila* (*tefila shel rosh)* on your head.
- Only the first blessing when replacing the arm *tefila* (*tefila shel yad)* on your arm.
- Each blessing in its correct place if you took off both.

REASON We say the blessing again for *tefilin* that fell off because there was discontinuity in thought (*hesech da'at*) when they fell off.

NOTE If you took the *tefilin* off between *bar'chu* and the end of *amida* and replaced them without saying the blessings:

- Wait until after you have finished the *amida*, and then
- Move each of the *tefilin* slightly, first the arm *tefila* and then the head *tefila*, and
- Say the appropriate blessings.

Tefilin: Replacing: Tefilin You Took Off by Choice

If you take off your *tefilin* without being required to do so and with the intention of replacing them, do not say the blessings when you replace them on your head and arm.

NOTE If you took the *tefilin* off between *bar'chu* and the end of *amida*, see the note to *Tefilin*: Replacing: *Tefilin* You Had To Take Off or That Fell Off.

TEFILIN: REMOVING

Tefilin: Removing: Earliest Time

The earliest time to remove *tefilin* on normal weekdays is after saying *u'va l'tzion*.

EXCEPTION If you wear *tefilin* on *chol ha'moed*, remove them after the *amida* in *shacharit*.

TEFILIN: STORING

Tefilin: Storing: How To Put Away

Put *tefilin* into its bag so that the knot on the arm *tefila* (*tefila shel yad*") faces away from the head *tefila* (*tefila shel rosh*).

REASON So that the arm *tefila* does not abrade the head *tefila*.

NOTE This is not a *halacha*, just good advice.

TEFILIN: CARE

Where Tefilin Must Be Black

Tefilin must be black as follows:

- *Tefilin* must be black on all of the exposed surfaces, but not on the bases/bottoms.
- *Tefilin* straps must be completely black on one surface.

TEFILIN: CHECKING

Tefilin: Checking: When

It is customary to check *tefilin* twice in each seven year period. *Tefilin* do not usually require checking, but you should periodically check:

- *Tefilin* of the type that can become *pasul* (due to white-washed parchment).
- *Tefilin* that are moved a lot, such as from place to place where there are large changes in temperature.
- *Tefilin* in humid climates, such as Florida.

NOTE Ask a *sofer* for advice about any of these cases.

TEFILIN: KISSING

Tefilin: Kissing

Kissing *tefilin* is not *halacha* but rather a custom to show our love for the *mitzva*.

TEFILIN: WHEN TO TOUCH

Tefilin: When To Touch: Shacharit

When praying on weekday mornings, touch and "kiss" the *tefilin* at:

- Places in the *shema* that mention *tefilin*, and
- *Potei'ach* in *ashrei*.

REASON When wearing *tefilin*, you should be constantly conscious that you are wearing them. One way of reminding ourselves that we are wearing *tefilin* is to touch them at these times.

NOTE To "kiss" *tefilin*, touch the box with one or more fingers and then kiss those fingers.

TEFILIN: ACTIVITIES WHILE WEARING

Tefilin: Activities While Wearing: Distractions

You may not do any activities while wearing *tefilin* that would distract you (*hesech da'at*) from remembering that you are wearing *tefilin*.

Tefilin: Activities While Wearing: Eating

You may eat a snack while wearing *tefilin*, but you may not eat a full meal (with bread).

TEFILIN: ROSH CHODESH AND CHOL HAMOED

TEFILIN: ROSH CHODESH

Tefilin: Removing before Rosh Chodesh Musaf

Remove *tefilin* before *musaf* on *Rosh Chodesh.*

TEFILIN: CHOL HAMOED

Tefilin: Chol HaMoed: Remove before Hallel

Remove *tefilin* before *hallel* on *chol ha'moed.*

EXCEPTION On *chol ha'moed Pesach*, on the day when *tefilin* are read about (*kadeish li*…), many people keep *tefilin* on until after the *Torah* has been read.

Tefilin: Chol HaMoed: In Eretz Yisrael

If you move to *Eretz Yisrael* (where no one wears*tefilin* on *chol ha'moed*) to live there permanently, do not continue to wear *tefilin* on *chol ha'moed* (if that was your custom).
If you are only visiting *Eretz Yisrael* but not living there permanently, follow your custom.

SITUATION Your custom is to wear *tefilin* on *chol ha'moed*, You are in Israel during chol ha'moed.

WHAT TO DO You still put on *tefilin*, but only in private, not in public.

Tefilin: Chol HaMoed: Blessing

If you wear *tefilin* on *chol ha'moed* (German and Lithuanian customs), do as follows:

- Jews of German descent: Say the *tefilin* blessings, and
- Jews of Lithuanian descent: Omit the *tefilin* blessings.

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