

Instructions

This PDF version of *How to Do Your T Shot: A Handbook for Hard Times* can be downloaded, printed, and shared by anyone, but please do not alter the original text or illustrations in any way that compromises the accuracy of the information. Otherwise, feel free to decorate and personalize the zine.

Follow these instructions to print and bind the zine:

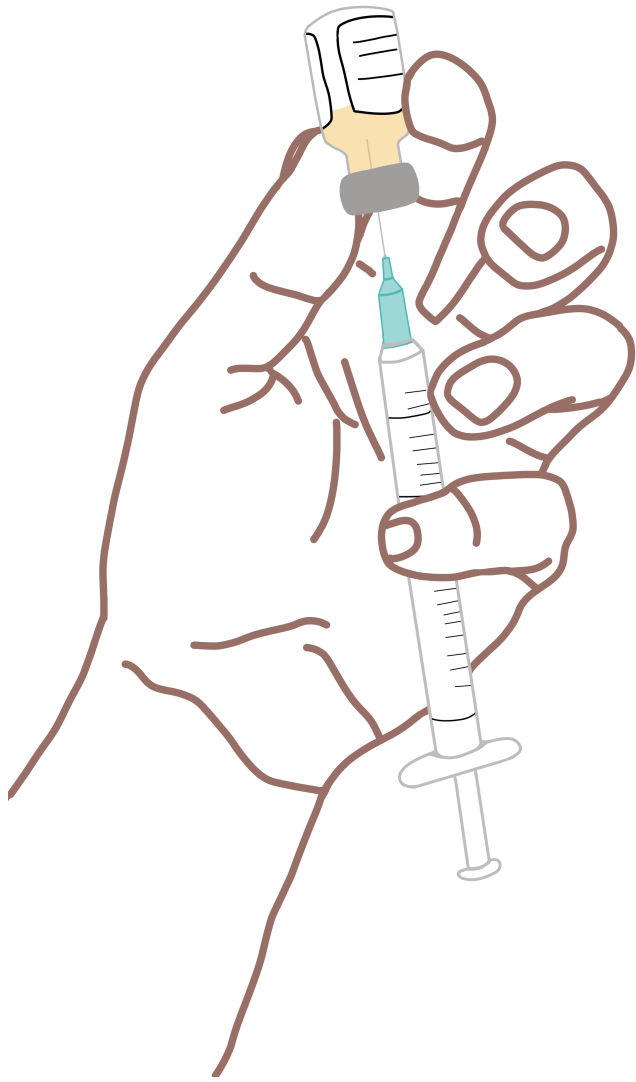
1. Print the PDF. Print double-sided using the “short-edge binding” setting (in the layout options). Also, set your page range to “3-19” (to avoid printing these instruction pages). Color printing is recommended, but black-and-white printing works just fine as well.
2. When you take the stack of paper out of the printer, make sure all the pages are stacked on top of each other neatly and all the edges are lined up. You can clip one of the shorter edges with a binder clip to keep the pages in place. If you don’t have a binder clip, you can just pinch one edge to keep the pages together.
3. Fold the stack of pages down the middle (along the shorter length, like a book). The title-page should be facing up.
4. With the zine folded in half and the title-page facing up, run your finger down the spine to smooth it out and deepen the crease. Flip the zine over and repeat the process.
5. Check to make sure that all the pages are in numerical order when you turn through the zine.
6. Bind the zine. You can bind the zine as-is or add a cover. Here are four binding styles you can try out:
 - a. **Stapling.** If you want to keep it simple, you can bind the zine by simply stapling the spine. Lay the stack of pages flat again with the title-page facing up. Then, staple the spine twice on the crease. Put one staple about a third of the way from the top of the spine and the second staple about a third of the way from the bottom of the spine.
 - b. **Pamphlet binding.** This is an easy sewn binding style. You can access a pamphlet binding tutorial on the University of Illinois Library Conservation Lab website, [linked here](#). (Scroll down to the “Making a Pamphlet Stitch” section of the page.)

- c. **Japanese four-hole stab binding.** Stab bindings are slightly more complicated and require more tools, but they can be very beautiful and are useful for binding longer works. To use a stab binding technique, you'll need to cut the zine pages along the crease you made (or simply cut the pages down the middle instead of creasing them). You can find a stab binding tutorial on Bookbinding Workshop Singapore, [linked here](#). (*Tip:* If you don't have an awl, or if your awl can't puncture all the pages, use a hammer and nails instead.)
 - d. **Cartonera binding.** This is a Latin American binding style that utilizes pieces of recycled cardboard as book covers. Cartonera books can also incorporate other binding styles (like Japanese stab binding, Coptic binding, and many others). The original deluxe edition of *How to Do Your T Shot* appears in a cartonera binding sewn in the Japanese four-hole stab style described above. Dulcinéia Catadora, a cartonera book publisher in Brazil, has a tutorial on YouTube, [linked here](#).
7. Share this zine. Feel free to distribute *How to Do Your T Shot* in both physical and digital formats. If you'd like to share your creations with Papaya Press, e-mail your photos to papayapress@duck.com

The original physical copies of *How to Do Your T Shot: A Handbook for Hard Times* were digitally printed, illustrated, and bound at Papaya Press in Los Angeles, California in the summer of 2023.

The information presented in *How to Do Your T Shot* was sourced from the Los Angeles LGBT Center and the websites of Fenway Health, Trans Care British Columbia, Planned Parenthood, and the Mayo Clinic. Please consult your healthcare provider before using this guide.

papayapress@duck.com



HOW TO DO YOUR T SHOT

A Handbook for Hard Times

Los Angeles
PAPAYA PRESS
2023

The original physical copies of *How to Do Your T Shot: A Handbook for Hard Times* were digitally printed, illustrated, and bound at Papaya Press in Los Angeles in 2023. Information presented here was sourced from the Los Angeles LGBT Center and the websites of Fenway Health, Planned Parenthood, and the Mayo Clinic. Please consult your healthcare provider before using this guide.

How to Do Your T Shot was produced in four formats:

Ten lettered deluxe copies in hand-decorated cartonera (recycled cardboard) bindings with three embroidered illustrations.

Fifteen numbered regular copies in paper wrappers with one embroidered illustration and two digitally printed illustrations.

Twenty-five numbered zine copies in paper wrappers with three digitally printed illustrations.

A printable PDF (distributed digitally).

The font is Athelas with numerals in Georgia. The embroidered illustrations are done on handmade paper.

This printable version may be distributed freely, but please do not alter the original text or illustrations in any way that compromises the accuracy of the information.

Cartonera books emerged in Argentina after the country's economic collapse in 2001. The cartonera style has since spread across Latin America as an inexpensive way for artists, writers, and activists to share their work even in times of crisis.

papayapress.tumblr.com • papayapress@duck.com

Trans survival is the foundation of trans resistance.
Our safety is the foundation of our survival.
We have a duty to protect each other.
Solidarity is our most important tool.
We have a duty to stand together.
No one will fight alone.

stay safe watch your back stick together keep it
weird make art love freely respect your community
don't snitch find solidarity find camaraderie don't
talk to cops share resources treasure yourself
treasure your friends find your family seriously
don't ever talk to cops know your rights fight for
our rights and always remember that being trans
is the greatest honor you can bear in this life

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Tips for Reducing Pain

1. Never reuse needles.
2. Use separate draw and injection needles.
3. Let the skin dry fully from the alcohol wipe before beginning the injection.
4. Keep the muscles in the injection area warm and relaxed.
5. Inject medicine that is at room temperature.
6. Break through the skin quickly with the needle.
7. Be careful not to move or jostle the needle while it is in the skin.
8. For intramuscular injections, you may be able to reduce pain by getting a tool called a ShotBlocker. The ShotBlocker is a small piece of plastic that you hold against your skin to put pressure around the injection site, which distracts from the pain of the needle. You can get these online and at some pharmacies.

Artist's Statement

In the last few months, I've taught three people how to do their T shots. Transphobic gaps in the medical system make it difficult for us to receive the healthcare we need, so it was important to me to help my loved ones use their T correctly and safely. The experience of helping these three people take their first steps into medical transition inspired me to create a handbook that could serve as both a practical and artistic object.

My transition has been rife with artistic inspirations. Would I know how to write about the body if I were not aware of how it can be molded to our desires? If I were not aware of how desire molds the body? Would I even know how to write about desire without the experience of wanting someone so much that I became him? The origin of art is change, just as it takes the shift of tectonic plates to make an oceanic trench. When strange new lifeforms begin to emerge, it's time to pick up the paintbrush — or the needle and thread, as it may be.

I chose to use embroidered illustrations in this zine because I wanted to show both the art and the creation of the art at the same time. Leaving the exposed threads visible on the verso of each image reveals this creation to the reader. The exposed threads imply the movement of the needle: the art is in the process, in the motion, in the tying of ends. The art is in the making.

I'm writing these paragraphs amidst a barrage of anti-trans legislation. Sometimes, I feel like I'm huddling in a bunker with nothing but an old MacBook Air and half a bottle of flat Diet Coke as a fire rages overhead. It's hard to imagine that art has much use in a time of such crisis, and maybe it doesn't. Handbooks, manifestos, and maps show our ways in and our ways out, but it is our

duty to lead each other down the paths we have plotted. We get through this alive when we get through it together, and our trans siblings' survival is our own.

I grew up in Northern Arizona, in a ponderosa pine forest at the base of the tallest mountain in the state. The wind at seven thousand feet above sea level was strong and sharp and, in the winters, the snowdrifts reached the eaves of the house. I barely survived those winters. The summers, though, were vivid and beautiful: warm mornings gave way to afternoons of silver monsoon clouds; the packed ice and snow that had locked the forest floor for months melted into creeks bordered by a lush growth of wild snapdragons and marigolds. White datura, with its blossoms the size of dinner plates, and rashes of prickly pear and jumping cholla grew at the feet of towering pines with bark that smelled like vanilla and butterscotch.

My transition has been, so far, my most arduous and triumphant work: a process of surgery letters, weekly injections, and government documents; the slow rhythm of bureaucracy marching in parallel with the even slower machinations of fat cells, skin, and hair. I won't bother explaining how the results of my transition were worth the undertaking, and I probably don't have to tell you that it is often a tremendous effort to keep oneself alive. What those long winters in the mountains taught me, though, is that is worth any toil to watch the wild snapdragons bloom, delicate and bright, among the cacti every summer.

Sharps Disposal & Access

Carefully dispose of needles and syringes after use. Improper disposal of sharps can be dangerous for people and the environment. In some places, it's illegal to dispose of sharps in standard trash cans.

To dispose of sharps, first place them in a sealable, puncture-resistant container. You can purchase a home sharps container from most pharmacies, and some doctors will give you one for free. Alternatively, you can use a plastic container, such as a laundry detergent bottle or milk jug, sealed with tape and labeled as "SHARPS."

You can dispose of sharps at some doctor's offices, health clinics, and pharmacies, but it's a good idea to check with a specific location ahead of time. At some places, like the Los Angeles LGBT Center, you can exchange your full sharps container for a new, empty one for free. Many cities also have alternative drop-off collection stations for used sharps. There are many of these locations across LA County, and you can find them through the Department of Water and Power website's Sharps & Safe Drug Disposal Locations map. Check their website for more information: <https://dpw.lacounty.gov/epd/hhw/Sharps>

Tip: Services like the Trans Needle Exchange can help you access clean needles. They are a nonprofit that provides free HRT needles by mail for trans people across the United States. In addition, some needles can be purchased online for lower prices than are available at pharmacies. Visit their website: <https://transneedles.org>

How to Do Your (Subcutaneous) T Shot

Step One: Get Prepped

Materials:

Testosterone in a vial

Disposable syringe (usually 1 or 3 mL, but sizes vary)

One draw needle (22-gauge, sizes vary)

One injection needle (25-gauge x 5/8 in., sizes vary)

Two alcohol swabs (one for vial, one for skin)

Puncture-proof sharps disposal container

Cotton ball or extra alcohol swab

Storage: You don't need to refrigerate testosterone. Store at room temperature away from moisture and light.

Notes on Needles and Syringes: The length of a draw needle doesn't matter, but the length of the injection needle does. Make sure you get the right size. Also, try syringes with a Luer-Lok tip. These are ideal for T injections.

Before you inject:

1. Check the expiration date on the medication vial. Do not use a medication with visible particles, or medication that is discolored or expired.
2. Check the package containing the syringe. Do not use if the package has been opened or damaged.
3. Make sure you have a clean workspace and wash your hands. Seriously, do it every time!

Step Two: Get Set

1. Remove the plastic cap from the vial. Clean the rubber stopper with an alcohol swab and allow it to air dry. If you are using a vial more than once, make sure to clean the stopper before each use.
2. Attach the draw needle to the syringe, then remove the plastic cover from the needle. Be careful not to touch the needle.
3. Pull back the plunger and draw air into the syringe. The amount of air drawn into the syringe should be the same amount as the dose of medication that your doctor prescribed. (For example: if your dose is 0.35 mL, draw 0.35 mL of air into the syringe.)
4. Keep the vial on your flat working surface and insert the needle straight down through the center of the rubber stopper into the bottle.
5. Inject the air from the syringe into the bottle. Make sure not to inject into the medication itself, which can make it harder to remove air bubbles later.
6. Turn the vial upside down with the needle still inside it. Slowly pull back on the plunger to fill the syringe with the medication to the number that matches your dose. Pushing some air or T back into the bottle and drawing the plunger back again may be necessary to draw out the right dose.

7. Once you've fully injected the dose, remove the needle from the muscle.
8. Gently press a cotton ball or clean alcohol swab on the injection site. Hold pressure on the site until there is no bleeding. You can use a band-aid if needed.

Tip: It can be normal to see a small amount of medication leakage or blood when withdrawing the needle. Usually this means the needle hit a capillary on the way out, which isn't a medical concern.

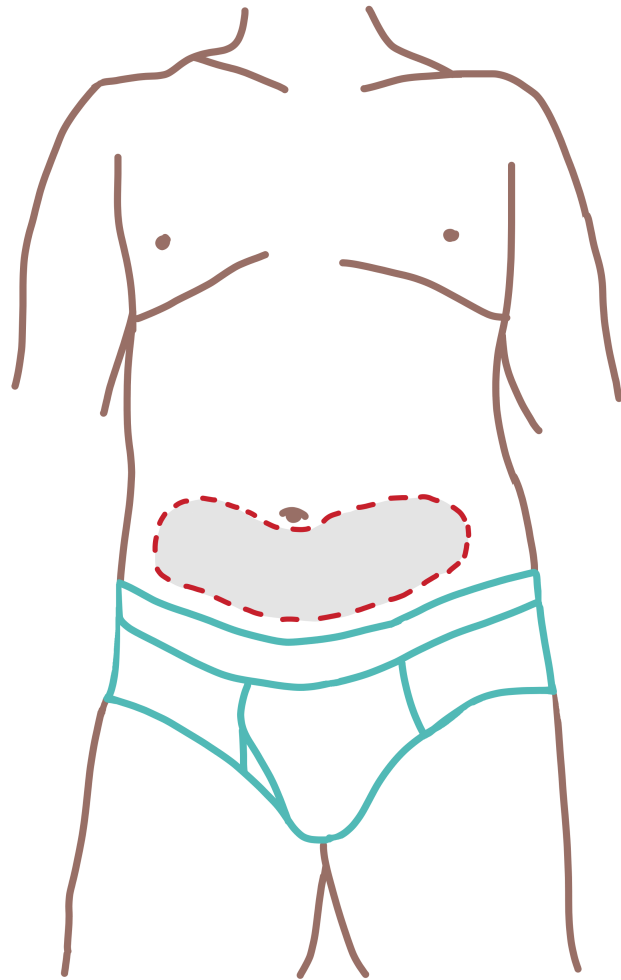
9. Dispose of the syringe and needles in an appropriate sharps container. Do not attempt to re-cap the injection needle or remove it from the syringe before disposal.

WHEN TO CONTACT A DOCTOR: If you have signs of an allergic reaction like a rash, itching, hoarseness, severe redness and swelling at the injection site, trouble swallowing, or any swelling of your hands, face, or mouth after you receive the medicine. If you have trouble breathing, that is a medical emergency. Call 911 or have someone drive you to the hospital immediately.

Step Four: Shoot!

Tip: If you're nervous, playing some music while injecting can help reduce anxiety.

1. Make sure your hands are clean.
 2. Clean the injection site skin and the surrounding skin with an alcohol swab. Let the skin air dry. Do not blow on or fan the area.
 3. Hold the prepared syringe with the hand you will use to give the injection.
 4. With one firm motion, insert the needle into the muscle at a 90-degree angle. Keep your leg muscle relaxed during this process.
 5. Aspirate, meaning pull back on the plunger of the syringe to check for blood. If you see blood in the syringe, do not inject the medicine, and remove the needle immediately. Replace the injection needle and try again at a different site.
 6. If you do not see any blood in the syringe, you can complete the injection by pushing the medicine slowly into the muscle. You may feel some burning or pressure as the medication enters the muscle. However, if you feel any intense pain, remove the needle. You can replace the injection needle and try again at a different site.
 7. Check to make sure that you have the correct dose in the syringe. It is very important that you use the exact dose prescribed by your doctor.
 8. Pull the syringe (with the needle attached) out of the bottle and carefully replace the plastic cap on the needle. Careful not to prick yourself!
- Tip:* If there are some small bubbles in the syringe or the plastic base of the needle at this point, that's okay. You'll be able to get them out when you attach the injection needle.
9. Pull the plunger down to draw the medication out of the plastic base of the needle. This will also draw a bit of air into the syringe, and allows you to remove the needle without spilling the medication.
 10. Remove the draw needle and discard it into the sharps container. Place the smaller injection needle securely on the syringe.
 11. Hold the syringe and the attached needle point-up and remove the protective cap from the injection needle. Push the plunger up to release air from inside the syringe and the plastic base of the needle. If there are still bubbles in the syringe, they can be removed at this point.
- Tip:* Try flicking the syringe to move air bubbles to the top, so they can be easily pushed out.



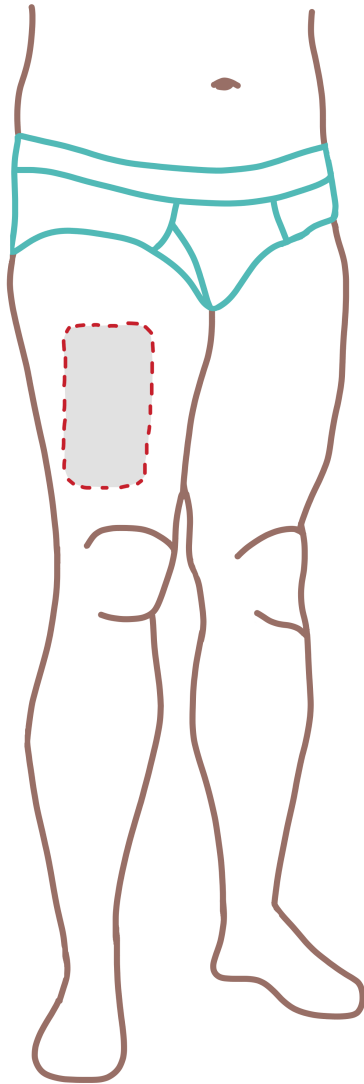
Step Three: Pick a Spot

There are a couple places to receive an intramuscular injection. If you're injecting yourself, a good site is the upper thigh (the vastus lateralis muscle). If someone else is injecting you, the butt is also an option. This guide addresses the method of injecting into the upper thigh.

To pick a spot on your leg, look at the top of your thigh, and imagine dividing it into a three-by-three grid. The injection goes into the outer middle third of the grid.

Tip: Switch legs each time you do an injection. This prevents scar tissue buildup and can reduce discomfort during injection.

Tip: Sitting upright with your feet flat on the floor is probably the best position in which to do your shot. Sitting on a soft surface (like a bed or couch) might make it easier for you to keep your muscles relaxed while injecting.



Step Three: Pick a Spot

There are several places you can give yourself a subcutaneous injection. This guide addresses the method of injecting into the abdomen.

Wherever you choose to inject, you should be able to firmly grasp the skin and pinch it into a one-inch fold. Always avoid the belly button or any bony areas, and any scars you might have.

Tip: Switch sides of your body each time you do an injection. This prevents scar tissue buildup and can reduce discomfort during injection.

Step Four: Shoot!

Tip: If you're nervous, it might make you feel more grounded (literally) to sit on the floor while injecting. Just make sure the area is clean and wash your hands if you accidentally touch the floor. Playing some music while you're doing your shot can also help reduce anxiety.

1. Make sure your hands are clean.
2. Clean the injection site skin and the surrounding skin with an alcohol swab. Let the skin air dry. Do not blow on or fan the area.
3. Hold the prepared syringe with the hand you will use to give the injection.
4. With the other hand, pinch a fold of skin. (You will inject into the skin between your fingers).
5. With one firm motion, insert the needle directly into the skin fold at a 45-degree angle. After inserting the needle, release your grip on the skin.

Tip: During subcutaneous injection, you don't need to aspirate because you're not injecting deep enough to hit any major blood vessels.

6. Gradually press down on the plunger to inject the medication into the subcutaneous tissue.

7. Check to make sure that you have the correct dose in the syringe. It is very important that you use the exact dose prescribed by your doctor.
8. Pull the syringe (with the needle attached) out of the bottle and carefully replace the plastic cap on the needle. Careful not to prick yourself!

Tip: If there are some small bubbles in the syringe or the plastic base of the needle at this point, that's okay. You'll be able to get them out when you attach the injection needle.

9. Pull the plunger down to draw the medication out of the plastic base of the needle. This will also draw a bit of air into the syringe, and allows you to remove the needle without spilling the medication.
10. Remove the draw needle and discard it into the sharps container. Place the injection needle securely on the syringe.
11. Hold the syringe and the attached needle point-up and remove the protective cap from the injection needle. Push the plunger up to release air from inside the syringe and the plastic base of the needle. If there are still bubbles in the syringe, they can be removed at this point.

Step Two: Get Set

1. Take the cap off the vial. Clean the rubber stopper with one alcohol swab, and then allow it to air dry. If you are using the vial more than once, make sure to clean the stopper before each use.
2. Attach the draw needle to the syringe, then remove the plastic cover from the needle. Be careful not to touch the needle.
3. Pull back the plunger and draw air into the syringe. The amount of air drawn into the syringe should be the same amount as the dose of medication that your doctor prescribed. (For example: if your dose is 0.35 mL, draw 0.35 mL of air into the syringe.)
4. Keep the vial on your flat working surface and insert the needle straight down through the center of the rubber stopper into the bottle.
5. Inject the air from the syringe into the bottle. Make sure not to inject into the medication itself, as that can make it harder to remove air bubbles from the syringe later.
6. Turn the vial upside down with the needle still inside it. Slowly pull back on the plunger to fill the syringe with the medication to the number that matches your dose. Pushing some air or T back into the bottle and drawing the plunger back again may be necessary to draw out the right dose.

7. Once you've fully injected the dose, remove the needle from your skin.
8. Gently press a cotton ball or clean alcohol swab on the injection site. Hold pressure on the site until there is no bleeding. You can use a band-aid if needed.

Tip: It can be normal to see a small amount of medication leakage or blood when withdrawing the needle. Usually this means the needle hit a capillary on the way out, which isn't a medical concern.

9. Dispose of the syringe and needles in an appropriate sharps container. Do not attempt to re-cap the injection needle or remove it from the syringe before disposal.

WHEN TO CONTACT A DOCTOR: If you have signs of an allergic reaction like a rash, itching, hoarseness, severe redness and swelling at the injection site, trouble swallowing, or any swelling of your hands, face, or mouth after you receive the medicine. If you have trouble breathing, that is a medical emergency. Call 911 or have someone drive you to the hospital immediately.

How to Do Your (Intramuscular) T Shot

Step One: Get Prepped

Materials:

Testosterone in a vial

Disposable syringe (usually 1 or 3 mL, but sizes vary)

One draw needle (18-20 gauge, sizes vary)

One injection needle (22-23 gauge x 1-1½ in., sizes vary)

Two alcohol swabs (one for vial, one for skin)

Puncture-proof sharps disposal container

Cotton ball or extra alcohol swab

Storage: You don't need to refrigerate testosterone. Store at room temperature away from moisture and light.

Notes on Needles and Syringes: The length of a draw needle doesn't matter, but the length of the injection needle does. Make sure you get the right size. Also, try syringes with a Luer-Lok tip. These are ideal for T injections.

Before you inject:

1. Check the expiration date on the medication vial. Do not use a medication with visible particles, or medication that is discolored or expired.
2. Check the package containing the syringe. Do not use if the package has been opened or damaged.
3. Make sure you have a clean workspace and wash your hands. Seriously, do it every time!