

# Boys and the Hood

August 2006

Some guys are willing to go through crazy contortions to reverse their circumcisions—taping, stretching, tugging, even surgery. A look at the ins and outs of foreskin restoration [By Veronica Cusack](#)



IMAGE CREDIT: MARK HOOPER

Alex\* stands naked at the bathroom mirror, his supplies arrayed neatly on the vanity before him: two small suspender clips sewn onto a length of wide elastic, a Crayola washable marker and a T-shaped strip of tape. It's one of a dozen or so strips fashioned from waxed butcher paper and 3M surgical tape that Alex prepared at the kitchen table the night before, much as his mother once assembled batches of pierogies to sustain the family throughout the week.

Alex is a 31-year-old financial consultant, but in his wide blue eyes and apple-red cheeks you can still see the pampered blithesome baby, the first-born son of parents anxious to do the right thing, to make him look just like Daddy. He grasps the base of his penis and pushes the shaft skin, limited though it is, forward until it folds, then marks the crease with Crayola dots. He positions the T-tape over the markings, wraps it around the glans, or head, and clips the end of the tape onto the elastic strap. He then loops the strap over his shoulder, thus pulling his penis tightly across his stomach—not hard enough to hurt, but enough to keep the skin taut, as it will remain for the next 10 hours. Alex's business suit hides all evidence of the contraption. He kisses his wife goodbye in his quiet Oakville home and drives away, with only a slight adjustment to the strapping as he starts his commute to Bay Street.

This is not simply one young man's singular fetish, but a serious, long-term attempt at restoration—Alex is trying to regrow his foreskin by stretching it. He has maintained his routine for 18 months and hopes another two years will be enough to complete the process. A decade ago, foreskin restoration was dismissed as a "San Francisco fad," but it's no longer a fringe phenomenon. Across the GTA and over much of the world, men are mirroring Alex's schedule. Most restorers seem to favour a variation on the taping method, but they can also choose from one of a growing number of commercial devices with such brand names as Foreballs, the TLC Tugger, PUD (penile uncircumcising device) and Tug Ahoy (its grip strength demonstrated by an alarming Web site photo showing two one-gallon jugs of milk hanging from a muscular fellow's member and the comment that it's not only comfortable but feels "really good!"). Surgery is also an option, but it can cost \$10,000 or more, and tales of resultant scarring and deformity are legion.

Though no one is keeping official statistics, the burgeoning Web presence of forums and chat groups, plus advocacy and information sites devoted to restoration, suggests that there are tens of thousands of men now at some stage of the procedure. Many consider infant circumcision a criminal assault and a violation of human rights; others are convinced it compromises sexual function.

"I'm not angry at anyone, as some men are," says Alex. "I just think this is a good thing for me. It's what I want." From mild-mannered bankers to strident advocates, these are men who keenly regret their physical loss, and they're willing to undergo radical measures to be "natural" again.

## Current Issue



[Subscribe to Toronto Life Magazine](#)

[Give a Gift](#)  
[Renew Subscription](#)  
[Check Account Status](#)  
[Change of Address](#)  
[Subscription FAQ](#)


## Contests

[Stella Artois Contest](#)  
[Taste of Toronto—Spring Edition](#)

## TORONTO LIFE CityGuides

[Arts & Entertainment Guide](#)  
[Bars & Clubs Guide](#)  
[Entertaining Guide](#)  
[Fashion & Beauty Guide](#)  
[Fitness & Wellness Guide](#)  
[Food Guide](#)  
[Getaways & Day Trips Guide](#)  
[Golf Guide](#)  
[Good Stuff Cheap Guide](#)  
[Home & Garden Guide](#)  
[Kids & Parents Guide](#)  
[Real Estate Guide](#)  
[Restaurants Guide](#)  
[Wine Guide](#)

\*Some names and details have been changed

CONTINUE   
Religious and tribal rites  
aside, the history of  
circumcision is ...

[Email](#) [Del.icio.us](#) [Digg](#) [Facebook](#)



**Customer Service**

- [Subscribe to Toronto Life magazine](#)
- [Give a gift](#)
- [Enquire about subscriptions](#)
- [Renew subscription](#)
- [Check account status](#)
- [Change of address](#)
- [Frequently asked questions](#)

**Quick Links**

- [Cheap eats](#)
- [Urban Decoder](#)
- [Chatto's Digest](#)
- [Find a restaurant](#)
- [Find events](#)
- [Where to get good stuff cheap](#)
- [Movies and nightlife](#)

**Search For**

- [Restaurant reviews](#)
- [Recommended wines](#)
- [Something to do tonight](#)
- [Something to do this weekend](#)
- [A cultural event](#)
- [Marketplace classifieds](#)
- [Feature articles](#)

**Newsletters**

Stay on top of the best the city has to offer with Preview, our free weekly email newsletter.

- Preview**
- 

**Toronto Life Cottager**

Your e-mail address

**SUBSCRIBE** 



[Subscribe](#) [Newsletters](#) [Privacy Policy](#) [About Us](#) [Contact Us](#) [Masthead](#) [Advertise](#)

sister sites



© 2008. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. REPRODUCTION IN WHOLE OR IN PART STRICTLY PROHIBITED.  
TORONTO LIFE IS A REGISTERED TRADEMARK OF TORONTO LIFE PUBLISHING COMPANY LIMITED  
BROWSER SUPPORT