

ICE FOR INJURY AND INFLAMMATION

Injury caused by a trauma, such as a bruise or a sprain, or a repetitive strain will cause inflammation. Inflammation is a good thing because your tissues need it to heal. Inflammation acts to isolate the injured area and initiates the repair process. However, if proper care of the injury is not taken, inflammation can hinder the healing process. If inflammation is left uncontrolled, nutrition flow to the injury will decrease, which may lead to scarring and dysfunctional muscle groups, which may ultimately lead to improper motion and on-going pain.

The following instructions describe what to do during the first 24 to 48 hours after receiving an injury. **They are meant as a general guideline only for our patient's reference. It is always best to call us, your doctor, or other qualified healthcare provider for advice specific to your situation if you are injured.** (Individuals suffering from Raynaud's phenomenon, peripheral vascular disease, or susceptibility to frostbite should be cautious when utilizing ice therapy).

A helpful aid in remembering what to do in case of an injury is the acronym PRICES.

P = protect

R = rest

I = ice

C = compress

E = elevate

S = stabilize

Immediately after sustaining an injury PROTECT it, REST it and ICE it.

Ice will cause the capillaries to shrink back to normal and naturally decrease pain. **(NEVER put an ice pack directly on your skin. Place a cloth towel or t-shirt between the injury and the ice pack.** As an impromptu ice pack get a towel wet and put it in a Ziploc bag and freeze it!)

Combining ICE and COMPRESSION aid in the resorption of excess intracellular fluids produced as a result of the injury. Studies have demonstrated that ice combined with compression is more effective than ice therapy alone. (Try securing the ice pack with an ace bandage).

ELEVATE the injury. This helps drain excess fluids away from the affected area.

STABILIZE the injury as soon as possible.

These methods will control the negative aspects of inflammation and create the optimum environment for your body to heal itself.

HOW LONG SHOULD I APPLY ICE FOR?

The amount of time and frequency that ice should be applied to an injury varies with the degree of injury and place of injury. A good rule of thumb is to remember the acronym CBAN. CBAN is what you feel when you apply ice to the injury.

First it feels COOL; then it BURNS; then it feels ACHY; finally it feels NUMB. CBAN.

When the area feels numb, due to decreased nerve conduction, it is time to remove the ice. This usually varies from a few minutes to 20 minutes. The ice can be reapplied when the area warms up to normal temperature (after about 60 minutes). This can be done several times a day.

Ice packs are a natural, drug free way to reduce inflammation and swelling with none of the adverse side effects that may be experienced with the use of costly medication.