

RICE Principle

Rest
Ice
Compression
Elevation

Initial treatment of sprains and strains is achieved with the "RICE" method. You should contact your physiotherapist as soon as possible to arrange a thorough assessment and determine the severity of your sprain or strain before beginning any treatment or rehab. The following is an explanation of the **RICE** method of treatment for sprains and strains:



Rest:

The first 24-48 hours after the injury is considered a critical treatment period and activities need to be restricted. Gradually use the injured extremity as much as tolerated, but try to avoid any activities that cause pain. Often using a splint, sling, or crutches is necessary to adequately rest the injured body part.

Ice:

For the first 48 hours post-injury, ice the sprain or strain 15-20 minutes at a time every 3-4 hours. The ice pack can be a bag of frozen vegetables (peas or corn), allowing you to be able to re-use the bag, or a specialized ice pack. Do NOT ice a sprain or strain for more than 20 minutes at a time!! You will not be helping heal the injury any faster, and you can cause damage to the tissues!



Compression:

Use compression when not icing the injured area following a sprain or strain in early treatment. Using a compression bandage, wrap the area overlapping the elastic bandage by one-half of the width of the bandage. The bandage should be snug, but not cutting off circulation to the extremity. So, if your fingers or toes become cold, blue, or tingle, remove and re-bandage!



Elevate:



Keep your sprain or strain elevated when at all possible. Try to get it higher than your heart if possible. This assists the inflammation fluid to drain out of the injured area. Elevate at night by placing pillows under your arm or leg.