

Ice Therapy

Why use Ice?

Cryotherapy, or ice aid therapy, is a long established and clinically proven method to aid the care of most musculoskeletal injuries, both during initial acute care and during later rehabilitation.

The beneficial effects of ice therapy include:

- reducing pain
- reducing muscle spasm
- reducing inflammation, swelling and tissue bleeding; and
- reduce and prevent secondary tissue damage and tissue damage

Ice is primarily recommended for the relief of pain, muscle spasm and swelling due to sprains, strains, or bruises. It is also useful for the relief of headaches, toothaches, minor burns, nose bleeds and insect bites and stings.

Application

Although ice therapy can be used any time during your care program, it is most effective when used during the first 48 - 72 hours following an injury or an exacerbation of a chronic injury. This will decrease the healing time of soft tissues and help to minimise the formation of scar tissue, leading to a more complete recovery.

Rest

Rest in a comfortable position where the injured area is immobilised. Do not massage.

Ice

For the average adult, apply ice to the injured area for 20 minutes every 2 hours for the first 48 – 72 hours (except when sleeping), or as directed by your Chiropractor. The application time for ice therapy may vary with body type and body part. Children have a lower tolerance to cold and may need to apply ice therapy for a shorter period of time.

Always place a light towel between the skin and the ice to avoid the possibility of frostbite or ice burns.

Compression

Compression helps to further reduce bleeding and swelling, and provides support for the injured area. Ice therapy is therefore more effective when combined with compression. This can be achieved by wrapping the area along with the ice pack in an elasticised bandage.

Elevation

For limbs only, raise the injured area above level of the heart. This further helps to reduce the bleeding and swelling.

With soft tissue injuries, you should also avoid the HARM factors in the first 48 to 72 hours:

- Heat -> increases bleeding
- Alcohol -> increases swelling
- Running -> or other exercise can make the injury worse
- Massage -> increases swelling and bleeding