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Putting people's lives in motion

When to use Ice

Ice is an analgesic (pain reliever). It does not “fix” an injury, however aids in the process of recovery by decreasing pain.

Ice helps to ease muscle pain by:

- Constricting blood vessels to restrict blood from pooling at the site of pain/injury, further decreasing inflammation and pain.
 - Ice will limit blood flow to the swollen area, saving you from the worst of the pain.

Ice works best on acute (onset – 2 weeks) injuries, such as pulls, strains, and minor tears – sudden inflammation/pain of a muscle.

You can use ice as long as the muscle remains inflamed. It usually takes 24 – 48 hours for swelling and redness to start decreasing.

While swelling and inflammation are present, healing of the injury is disrupted. Due to the constriction from the swelling:

- Muscles are weakened
- Loss of range of motion to the joint
- Blood flow is not sufficient to bring in nutrients for healing

Remember RICE: rest, ice, compression, and elevate

How to use Ice

- Good ol’ ice cubes!, bags of frozen vegetables, specially made ice/gel packs

Application 15-20 minutes.

Repeat as often as needed, while the area is still inflamed.



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When to use **Heat**

Heat works by:

- Increasing blood flow to the painful area and slightly penetrating the tissue to help relax stiff muscles and relieve pain.
- Psychologically reassuring due to its comforting nature, therefore relieving pain.
 - A warm shower sounds more appealing than forcing an ice pack on your throbbing muscle doesn't it!

Heat is the ideal treatment for:

- muscle pains and minor muscle injuries (after inflammation has subsided) due to it relaxing the muscle.
- Everyday soreness from sports, workouts, and other physical activities.
 - Muscle soreness can linger a while, but you don't want to ice it because the muscle isn't inflamed, making heat the better choice to ease the tension.
 - DOMS : delayed onset of muscle soreness
 - Extremely common and nearly impossible to avoid if you work out intensely!
 - Peaks 24-72 hours after exercise

How to use heat

- Heating pad, bean bags, gel packs, showers, hot tubs, etc. (there are tons!)

Rule of thumb: 20 minutes on, 20 minutes off – up to 3 times a day!

Common sense: Don't sleep with a heating pad on overnight or leave anything on long enough to burn yourself.

Combination treatments work well!

Example: Take a hot shower, then wear a heating wrap at work during the day.

When dealing with low back pain, special heat wraps or patches under clothing work well, to assist in easing tension throughout the day. They put out a lower level of heat, making them safe to use for several hours.