



BACK FACTS: Strains & Sprains

No matter how many safety precautions you take, inevitably, there will come a time when you will acquire some kind of injury. Here are five simple rules to help speed-up your rate of recovery in the first 72 hours of sprain (ligaments) or strain (muscle) injuries. Note: if you are unsure of the severity of your injuries, please consult a qualified health professional.

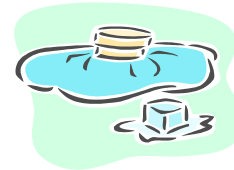


Whether it's an ankle, knee, or wrist sprain, all you have to remember is PRICE.

P is for PROTECTION. Protect the injured area from sustaining any more damage. A sling or elastic wrap is most often used. Avoid activities that aggravate the injury or make it worse.

R is for REST. Allow the injury time to heal. Again, avoid activities that cause pain, swelling or discomfort. However, do not avoid all activities! For example, if you injure your shoulder, you may still be able to go for a walk. Try to do some form of exercise to keep up your cardiovascular levels and also prevent muscles from becoming weak.

I is for ICE. Ice should be applied to an injured area as soon as possible. A bag of crushed ice or frozen peas can be wrapped in a damp towel to prevent burns. Use the 10/10/10 method of ice application. This means: 10 minutes of ice; followed by 10 minutes of rest without ice; followed by 10 minutes of ice again. This should be repeated as many times as possible during the first 72 hours of injury. If you notice a white area, stop icing immediately. This could indicate frostbite. If you have diabetes, vascular disease or any decrease in sensation, consult a health professional before applying ice.



Ice works to reduce pain and inflammation to your injured muscles, joints and tissues and may even slow bleeding if a tear has occurred. If you notice a white area, stop treatment immediately. This could indicate frostbite. If you have diabetes, vascular disease or any decrease in sensation, consult a qualified health professional before applying ice.

C is for COMPRESSION. Use a tensor bandage to wrap the injured area. Ensure that the wrapping is not so tight as to cut off or impair blood circulation. Compression is used to help stop swelling. When wrapping, begin at the end furthest away from the heart. For example, when wrapping an ankle, begin at your toes and work your way up to your calf.

E is for ELEVATION. Try to raise the injured area above the level of the heart if possible, especially at night, by putting a pillow two under the injured area. This uses gravity to help reduce swelling by draining excess fluid.

After the first 48 hours, slowly start to use the injured area again and continue icing for another day. You should gradually see improvement in your joint's ability to move without pain and support your weight. If your injury is not improving by the fourth or fifth day, consult a chiropractor or other qualified health professional.

Canada's chiropractors – here to help

Chiropractors can help treat your sprains and strains. Various treatment modalities may be used to help to decrease pain during the acute initial phases and during rehabilitation. Stretching and specific exercises may be prescribed to help prevent future injuries. To increase mobility of the joint, mobilization and adjustment may be used.

For more information or to locate a chiropractor near you, please visit the Canadian Chiropractic Association website www.chiropracticcanada.ca.

For a sprain or strain - PRICE away the pain.

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