

Many injuries can be prevented by proper conditioning and training practices. However, if an injury occurs, the manner in which it is handled has a significant impact on recovery time. Remembering the acronym R.I.C.E. (Rest, Ice, Compression, and Elevation) can help you remember how to treat injuries effectively.

If swelling and pain persist after three days, consult your physician. An x-ray may be needed to rule out the possibility of a fracture or other serious injury.

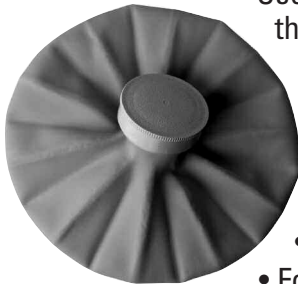
R.I.C.E.

- R.I.C.E. can be used for short term treatment of sprains, strains, fractures or joint injuries.
- Immediate treatment with R.I.C.E. is important; swelling can start within 10 seconds after an injury.

R= Rest:

As soon as an injury has taken place, stop activity immediately. Resting the injured area is critical for proper healing.

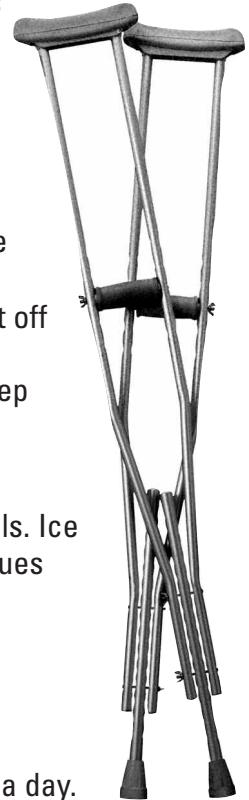
- Use crutches for injuries of the foot, ankle, knee and leg, to keep weight off of the injured area.
- Use splints for injuries to the hand, wrist, elbow and arm to keep the area immobilized.



I= Ice:

Ice reduces swelling and pain by constricting blood vessels. Ice also decreases the pooling of blood within the injured tissues which results in faster healing.

- Cover the entire injury when applying ice.
- For small body parts, immerse the injured area in a cup (i.e. fingers) or bucket (i.e. ankles) of ice water; use ice packs for larger areas (i.e. knee).
- Apply ice for 20-30 minutes, for the first 48-72 hours, three to four times a day.



C= Compression:

Compressing the injured area decreases the swelling by limiting blood and plasma flow.

- Between icings, apply compression by wrapping the injured area with an elastic wrap whenever possible.
- Begin wrapping at the farthest point away from the body and wrap toward the heart.
- Warning: Pain, numbness, cramping and blue or dusky colored nails are all signs of blood deprivation. Remove compression bandage immediately if any of these symptoms occur. Once the symptoms are gone, rewrap the area less tightly.
- Do not sleep with a compression wrap on, unless instructed by a doctor.

E= Elevation:

Elevate the injured area to help drain excess fluid and further decrease swelling in the area.

- Elevate a lower extremity overnight by placing a pillow underneath the mattress.

For further information on the R.I.C.E. treatment for injuries, contact the National Institute for Fitness and Sport at (317) 274.3432.