

The RICE Regime

First 48-72 Hours After Injury

1) REST

Rest is important as an early measure to ensure injury does not get any worse. Rest an injury for twenty-four hours before starting any exercise. Massaging an injury may worsen it by causing further damage to the tissues and more bleeding.

2) ICE

Cool the injury by any method to hand for at least half an hour after the injury. Ice is excellent but should not be applied directly to the skin (wrap ice up in a cloth). Water can be applied directly holding the injury under a cold tap. Ice can be reapplied every two hours with an acute injury. Compresses- a towel or cloth wrung out in cold water can be used. Wet it again as it warms up against the skin. There are many types of cooling packs (including packs of peas!) available. If you are not able to use any of the above methods, exposing the injury to the air will help. Cooling helps constrict the blood vessels at the site of injury and stops further bleeding and bruising. In the early stages heat applications should not be used as they have the opposite effect.

3) COMPRESSION

Gently compressing the injury helps to stop further bleeding. If a joint is being bandaged (e.g. ankle) start bandaging well below and finish well above it, so it is stable and supported. Always bandage from the further point towards the centre of the body. Ensure that the bandage is not too tight by frequently checking toes or fingers. If they are any cooler or darker in colour to the other foot or hand, the bandage is probably too tight, so remove the bandage and re-apply it more loosely. Use a bandage that is easily removable- crepe, or elasticated - but not adhesive so that it may be easily removed and reapplied if necessary.

4) ELEVATION

Raising an injury helps it to drain by gravity, reducing bruising and swelling. If the injury is to the lower leg, sit, or lie down with your leg higher than your hip. Injured wrists should be rested in a sling with the hand higher than the elbow.

After 72 Hours

1) ICE

Ice: As described before for five to ten minutes.

2) ANTI INFLAMMATORY GEL

(Traxam, Ibuleve Gel, Feldene Gel, Voltarol Emulgel): Apply directly to the injured area by Deep Transverse Friction Massage for five minutes (not just smoothed lightly onto the skin surface!).

3) EXERCISES

Appropriate stretches to start with and later mobilising and strengthening exercises, for the damaged area. Repeat the regime two, or three times per day.