



*U.S. Army – Baylor University
Doctoral Program in Physical Therapy*



"RICE" Concept

The immediate treatment for almost all injuries (either a new injury or a chronic pain syndrome) is the "RICE" concept. "RICE" stands for **R**est, **I**ce, **C**ompression and **E**levation. "RICE" helps control swelling, muscle spasms, hemorrhage, and PAIN.

R=REST. Some form of rest is needed for all injuries. Sometimes rest can mean immobilizing/casting the area such as with bony fractures. Other times it could mean the use of crutches/cane to decrease the pressures through the joint. In some cases rest means doing another activity. For example, people that have an increase in knee pain with running may need to rest the knee by doing another less stressful activity - such as biking, swimming, or walking.

I=ICE. Ice is often prescribed to help control pain, inflammation, and muscle spasms in all types of injuries - new and old. Further, ice can aid in decreasing swelling in painful/swollen joints or tissues. While icing you will feel four sensations: cold, pain, burning and numbness. Always ice until you reach numbness. Two ways to ice are presented on the back of this handout.

C=COMPRESSION. Compression limits swelling. Following an injury blood and fluid can build up in the damaged tissue and can delay healing. Most braces and/or ace wraps are compressive agents. Although compression is good, it is best to remove compressive agents at night and completely elevate the injured body part above the heart.

E=ELEVATION. Elevating an injure body part **ABOVE THE HEART** encourages drainage of excess fluid from the injured area. Remember, it must be above the heart!

P=PROTECTION. Sometimes the "RICE" concept is expanded and called "PRICE". An injury needs protection from further injury - i.e. a brace and/or a profile. You may be on a profile longer than you expect to allow for adequate healing. The average healing time for soft tissues (muscles and ligaments) is 6-8 weeks.

How to Make a Homemade Ice Pack

Get a gallon size Ziploc freezer bag. You may want to double bag to avoid leakage.

Put in a mixture consisting of one part rubbing alcohol and two parts water.

Place bag in freezer, it will form a slushy ice pack.

Put ice pack in a wet towel and place it on the involved area for approximately 15-20 minutes. Remember; always ice until the area goes numb to touch.

This ice pack is reusable.

Ice Massage

Some people prefer to do an ice massage because it saves time.

Freeze water in a paper or Styrofoam cup. Peel the cup away from the ice.

Rub the ice on the affected area by moving the ice in small circles or short strokes.

An ICE MASSAGE should take about 5 to 7 minutes to achieve numbness.

