

Are You Icing Properly?

The use of ice in conjunction with manual therapies is extremely helpful in decreasing swelling, local inflammation and reducing pain.

While the use of heat tends to be more comforting, it's not always the best choice for reducing the effects of an injury. Heat may help to relax tight muscles but it also promotes blood flow to the area, which can actually make the problem worse during an acute injury. More blood flow means more inflammation and swelling. This means a slower recovery.

Ice on the other hand decreases blood flow, decreases local temperature (counteracting the effects of inflammation), promotes the removal inflammatory swelling and decreases nerve sensitivity to pain. In the end, you heal faster and hurt less.

The best way to apply cold therapy is through a method that conforms to the skins surface. The use of a gel pack, is an excellent method which is durable, can be used and re-used numerous times with ease, stays cold for extended periods and requires no preparation. Also, they can be put in the microwave and used as heat packs when needed.

To best use cold therapy, place a damp cloth or paper towel over the skins surface first. Then place the cold pack directly over the wet barrier. This method helps to transfer cold easily and helps to prevent "freezer-burn" of your skin.

1. Apply cold pack for 10 minutes.
2. Remove and place back in the freezer for 10 minutes.
3. Apply again for another 10 minutes.



While this cycle can be repeated several times, a 30 minute break should be used in between cycles. This on-again-off-again routine both protects your skin and allows the skins surface and deeper tissues to relax and regain their normal blood-flow between icing periods.

Rapid Relief gel packs are available at Restorative Health. Please ask our Health Team if you have any questions about these durable and easy-to-use cold packs.

*Always follow the instructions of your healthcare provider when applying cold therapy.

**Never leave a cold pack on the skins surface for longer than 20 minutes at a time.

***Consult a healthcare professional immediately if you experience frost-bite in the treated area.

