



R.I.C.E.

Rest - Ice - Compression - Elevation

R.I.C.E. is an acronym to remember first aid instructions for prompt treatment of acute injuries. This treatment method is helpful for injuries such as mild sprains, strains, and overuse. It is most effective when applied in the first 48 to 72 hours after the injury.



Rest

- **Stop the activity.**
- Reduce your daily activities as much as possible and stop your regular exercises for 48-72 hrs.
- This gives the injured area time to recover and protects against further injury taking place.

Ice

- Apply during the first 72 hours after injury.
- Heat should not be applied to an acute injury because it will cause more swelling.
- **Ice should be applied for 20-30 minutes for several times a day. Less than 20 minutes is not as effective, over 30 minutes has that same effect as heat. Wait for 1-2 hours between ice applications.**
- You can make an easy ice pack by filling a zip lock plastic bag with ice and then apply it to the injured area. A bag of frozen vegetables wrapped in a towel could also be used.

Compression

- When an injury occurs, bleeding and fluid causes swelling.
- An elastic wrap bandage will help reduce this swelling by not allowing expansion to occur.
- When applying an elastic wrap, **always wrap toward the heart (distal to proximal).** Do not wrap so tightly that blood circulation is cut off. Loosen the wrap if fingers or toes become cold and begin feel numb.



Elevation

- Edema (swelling) is often present after injuries.
- Injured extremities should be elevated above the level of the heart to counteract the effects of gravity and the pooling of blood.
- This is best done in combination with rest, when sitting or laying down.

Call UHS if you experience:

- severe pain
- inability to bear weight on injury
- redness or red streaks from injury
- numbness or unable to move injury
- bumps or lumps around injury
- a fever and the area appears swollen and warm
- no improvement after using R.I.C.E. or other self-care methods for 48 hours

With any injury, if there is any indication that it is a broken bone or serious joint injury, call 911 (or 574-631-5555 to reach NDPD)

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