

Heat and Ice Instructions

Heat

Heat has a number of therapeutic benefits. Not only does it often feel very good to place heat on an area where you have pain, placing heat on your body will help to increase the blood flow brought to that area. Increased blood flow allows your muscles to receive more oxygen and nutrients, and also increases the presence of immune cells involved in the healing process. Research has shown that treating certain injuries with heat will actually speed up healing time for these reasons. Follow these simple steps to take advantage of the healing power of heat!

- a. Place a heating pad, hot pack, or other heating modality recommended by your physician on the affected area. Make sure that the heating pad is not too hot as to avoid burning the skin. You may want to place a towel around it as a barrier.
- b. Leave the heat in place for about 10 minutes, not exceeding 15 minutes
- c. For Chronic Injuries
 - i. If you've had the pain for longer than 3 months, you may benefit most from using only heat. Leave the heating pad in place for 10 minutes, then remove it for 10 minutes. Repeat this cycle as needed throughout the day.
- d. For Acute Injuries
 - i. If you've had your pain for less than 3 months, you may benefit most from using heat and ice. Leave the heating pad in place for 10 minutes, remove it, and then place the ice pack on the same area for 10 minutes (see instructions below). Repeat this cycle as needed throughout the day.

Ice

Ice is an analgesic, which means that it can be used to relieve pain. Unlike heat, ice does not possess many other therapeutic benefits. While applied, it decreases blood flow and delays swelling. However, it also backs up lymph drainage so when the ice is removed, swelling will often increase. Therefore, it is important to use ice properly to have the benefits while minimizing the downsides. Follow the steps below for best results!

- a. Place an ice pack or other cooling modality recommended by your physician on the affected area. You may want to place a towel around it as a barrier.
- b. Leave the ice in place for about 10 minutes, not exceeding 15 minutes
- c. For Chronic Injuries
 - a. If you've had the pain for longer than 3 months, unless otherwise recommended by your physician, you may benefit most from using heat. See the instructions above for more information
- d. For Acute Injuries
 - ii. If you've had the pain for longer than 3 months, you may benefit most from using heat and ice in combination. See the instructions above for more information