

Ice or Heat for Injuries?

The answer to this frequently asked question is "ice" in most cases. Ice is a must for the first 72 hours after an injury because it reduces swelling.

The best ice treatment is a gel pack applied for 20 minutes at a time as often as possible. A gel pack can be used over and over and molds to the area you're icing (don't confuse these with the Blue Ice that you use in your coolers!). You can also use a bag of frozen peas, or directly apply an ice cube with ice massage. Make sure to keep the ice cube moving and don't leave it on the skin for more than 2 minutes or you risk damaging the skin. While you're toughing out the cold, remember the normal stages of response with ice treatment: immediate coolness, burning sensation, brief aching, and then numbness.

Heat is best used after the swelling is gone to help with chronic pain or stiffness and muscle spasm. Don't use heat within 72 hours of an acute injury and remember to use moist heat to protect your skin.

If you get injured, take care of yourself and don't ignore what your body is telling you. If the pain and swelling last for more than 2-3 days, consult a specialist. Getting immediate care and keeping up the icing can mean the difference between days of recovery or months of rehabilitation.

Yours in health,

Dr. Rick

Dr. Rick Schlusel is a Chiropractor and Applied Kinesiologist providing preventive health care, treatment for pain and injuries, holistic health assessments and a variety of natural therapies. He can be reached at The Healing Place at 530-889-0388 or by email at rick@mydrick.com