

R.I.C.E. stands for rest, ice, compression, and elevation- in first aid for many injuries. This term appears in medical information about athletic injuries and will help you if you hurt yourself.

Rest

Stop using the injured part, and rest it (for about 48 hours) as soon as you realize an injury has taken place. Continued exercise or other activity could cause further injury, delay healing, increase pain, and risk bleeding. Use crutches to avoid bearing weight on injuries of the foot, ankle, knee, or leg. Use splints for injuries of the hand, wrist, elbow, or arm. After medical care, the injured part may require it to be kept still with splints or a cast to keep the area at rest until it heals.

Ice

- Ice helps stop internal bleeding from injured blood vessels. Sudden cold causes small blood vessels to contract. This contraction of blood vessels decreases the amount of blood that can collect around the wound. The more blood that collects, the longer the healing time. Ice can be safely applied in several ways as below:
- For injury to a small area, such as a finger, toe, foot, or wrist, immerse the injured area in a bucket of ice water. Use ice cubes to keep the water cold, as ice dissolves.
- For injury to a larger area, use ice packs. Avoid placing ice directly on the skin. Before applying the ice, place a towel, cloth, or one or two layers of an elasticized compression bandage (Ace bandage) on the skin to be iced. To make the ice pack, put ice chips or ice cubes in a plastic bag, or wrap them in a thin towel. Place the ice pack over the cloth. The pack may sit directly on the injured part, or it may be wrapped in place.
- Ice the injured area for about 20 minutes at a time.
- Repeat the icing 4-8 times a day, while following the instructions below for compression and elevation. Ice treatment may be stopped after 48-72 hours. At that point, heat is often more comfortable. Or you might try both. Alternative 5 minutes of hot water with 5 minutes of ice water.

Compression

Compression decreases swelling by slowing the bleeding and limiting your blood pooling near the injured site. Without compression, fluid from nearby normal tissues seeps into the injury area. The more blood and fluid that is surrounding an injury, the slower the healing. The following are directions for safely applying compression to an injury:

- Use an elasticized bandage (Ace bandage) for compression, if possible. If you do not have one available, any kind of cloth will work for a short time. Wrap the injured part firmly, wrapping over the ice also. Begin wrapping below the injury site, and extend above the injury site.
- Be careful not to compress the area so tightly that you cut off the blood supply.. Signs of less blood supply to the area include pain, numbness, cramping, and blue or dusky-colored nails. Remove the compression bandage right away if any of these symptoms appears. Leave the bandage off until all signs go away. Then rewrap the area-less tightly this time.

Elevation

Elevating the injured part above the level of the heart is another way to lessen swelling and pain at the injury site. Elevate the iced, compressed area in whatever way is most convenient. Prop an injured leg on solid objects or pillows. Elevate an injured arm by lying down and placing pillows under the arm or placing them on the chest with the arm folded across. The whole upper part of the body may be elevated gently with pillows or a reclining chair or by raising the head of the bed on blocks.

Notify our office if: 1. You have questions about R.I.C.E. therapy 2. After 24 hours of R.I.C.E., the symptoms don't improve or they become worse 3. Anytime severe pain occurs 4. There is a visible deformity of the injured area.