



# **R.I.C.E.**

## **(Rest, Ice, Compression, Elevation)**

One of the most recommended icing techniques for reducing inflammation and treating minor injuries is R.I.C.E., an acronym for Rest, ICE, Compression and Elevation. It is best used for:

- pulled muscles
- sprained ligaments
- soft tissue injuries
- joint aches
- acute injuries

Applying R.I.C.E. treatments will decrease:

- pain
- inflammation
- muscle spasms
- swelling
- tissue damage

R.I.C.E. reduces blood flow from local vessels near the injury and decreases fluid hemorrhaging which results from cell damage.

### **Rest**

- Stop using the injured body part immediately. If you feel pain when you move, this is your body sending a signal to decrease mobility of the injured area.

**Ice**

- Apply an ice pack to the injured area, using a towel or cover to protect your skin from frostbite. The more conforming (adopting shape of body part) the ice pack is, the better, in order for the injury to receive maximum exposure to the treatment.

**Compression**

- Use a pressure bandage or wrap over the ice pack to help reduce swelling. Never tighten the bandage or wrap to the point of cutting off blood flow. You should not feel pain or any tingly sensations while using compression.

**Elevation**

- Raise or prop up the injured area so that it rests above the level of your heart to help prevent or limit swelling.

How long should ice be applied while practicing R.I.C.E. for it to be effective? There are four levels of cold felt by the skin:

- coldness
- a prickly or burning sensation
- a feeling of aching pain
- finally a lack of sensation or numbness

When the area feels numb, icing should be discontinued. The skin should return to normal body temperature before icing again. Usually numbness can be achieved in 10 to 20 minutes. Never apply ice for more than 30 minutes at a time or tissue damage may occur.

It is generally recommended to practice R.I.C.E. at intervals of 4 to 6 hours for up to 48 hours after an injury.