

Bio-mechanics of Las Vegas
Dr. Kintaro Oku, DC
2470 St. Rose Pkwy, Ste. 303
Las Vegas, NV 89074
Website: DrOkuLive.com

Phone: (702) 579-9876
Fax: (702) 579-9877
Email: droku@drukulive.com

THERAPEUTIC USE OF ICE

WHY USE ICE?

Ice treatment is most commonly used for acute injuries. If you have a recent injury (within the last 48 - 72 hours), where swelling is a problem, you should be using ice treatment. Ice packs can help minimize swelling around the injury. Decreasing swelling around an injury will help to control the pain. An application of ice over the area will cause the blood vessels to constrict, thereby decreasing swelling and pain. Ice treatments may also be used for chronic conditions, such as overuse injuries in athletes. In this case, ice the injured area *after activity*. Never ice a chronic injury before activity. However, icing after activity will help control the inflammatory response.

Prior to understanding why one should use ice for therapeutic results we should talk about a protective mechanism the body has against undue cooling of any peripheral body part. When an area is cooled, it first reacts by constricting the blood vessels for 15 – 20 minutes (therapeutic effect) – after which time the vessels dilate to protect the region from freezing. This is why, in order to gain a therapeutic benefit from ice, we recommend that you ice an area for 15 – 20 minutes, no longer.

HOW TO USE ICE

Ice the area for 15 – 20 minutes on and 1 hour off. This should be done as often as possible for the following 72-hour period. Be sure to place a towel or cloth between your skin and the ice. Too much ice can do harm, even cause frostbite.

THERAPEUTIC USE OF HEAT

Heat treatments should be used for chronic conditions to help relax and loosen tissues, and to stimulate blood flow to the area. Use heat treatments on chronic conditions, such as overuse injuries before participating in activities. Do not use heat treatments after activity, and do not use heat after an acute injury (see above). Because heat vasodilates blood vessels, it is generally not used in the first 48 - 72 hours after the onset of pain.

HOW TO USE HEAT

Heating tissues can be accomplished using a heating pad, or even a hot, wet towel. Heat the area for 15 -20 minutes. However, be cautious when using heat. Even when heat is the best treatment for your discomfort, hotter is not always better. Your skin can overheat and even burn. Use layers of towels between the heat source and your skin to avoid the risk of a burn. Sleeping with an electric hot pad is a bad idea. The prolonged heat can burn your skin. Watch for areas of redness that don't go away within 20 minutes. This can be a sign that the temperature of the heat source is too high. Alert your doctor to any unusual increase in your area of pain. Never leave heating pads or towels on for extended periods or while sleeping.

RETURN TO ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

It is our goal in this practice and consistent with recent research to strongly encourage return to everyday activities as soon as possible following an injury. When there is a return to activity, it should be for the most part pain free. If at anytime during activity/exercise there is a period of pain, activity should cease. However, mild discomfort can be expected initially following injury.