

# RICE: Rest, Ice, Compression, and Elevation for Injuries

## What is RICE?

The term RICE stands for Rest, Ice, Compression, and Elevation.

RICE is used as the first treatment for many muscle strains, ligament sprains, or other bruises and injuries. RICE is used immediately after an injury happens and for the first 24 to 48 hours after the injury. Rest, ice, compression, and elevation can help reduce the swelling and pain and help you heal faster.

## What does the rest mean?

After a muscle, bone, or joint injury you need to take some time off from your activities to allow your body to heal. For example, if you sprained your ankle, you need to not walk around or put weight on your ankle. You should rest the injured body part until it no longer hurts to use it or put pressure on it. You should rest the injured body part for at least 1 to 2 days. If the injury is serious, you may need to see a healthcare provider. In these cases, you may need crutches, a splint, or cast and need to rest the injury for an even longer period of time.

## How should I use ice?

Ice helps control swelling and inflammation around the injured area. Ice should be put on an injury as soon as possible. Putting ice on early usually helps the injury heal faster.

Never put ice directly on the skin. Wrap a bag of ice in a towel or a piece of clothing. If ice is not available, use a bag of frozen vegetables such as peas or corn. The idea is to put something cold over the injured area. Even a cold water bottle is fine.

Leave the ice on for 15 to 20 minutes at a time then remove it for 15 to 20 minutes so the area can warm up to room temperature. You may repeat this on and off process for as long as you want. Ice should be used as often as possible during the first 1 to 2 days after an injury.

## How do I use compression?

Compression helps limit swelling to the injured area. It also provides some additional support to the injured area. You may use an elastic bandage, trainer's tape, or even a piece of clothing to tie around the injured area. Be sure not to tie it too tightly. Putting it on too tight can cut off the blood supply to the area.

## What about elevation?

Elevation is another way to help decrease swelling by using gravity. If you can, keep the injured part above the level of your heart. This helps blood go back to the heart. If you can't raise the injured body part above the level of your heart, at least keep it parallel to the ground.

---

Published by McKesson Corporation.

This content is reviewed periodically and is subject to change as new health information becomes available. The information is intended to inform and educate and is not a replacement for medical evaluation, advice, diagnosis or treatment by a healthcare professional.

Written by Lee Mancini, MD., CSCS.

Copyright © 2007 McKesson Corporation and/or one of its subsidiaries. All Rights Reserved.

**Special Instructions:**

Copyright © Clinical Reference Systems 2007

**Adult Health Advisor**