

# Acute Management of Sprains & Strains

The immediate management for acute joint and muscle injuries can be summed up with the acronym **PRICER**.

## **PROTECT**

Stop the injuring activity to help prevent any further tissue injury from occurring. Do not push through the pain, it is your body's way of telling you that something is wrong!

## **REST**

Take a few days off from the activity you usually do, to allow the healing process to begin. If you continue to stress the tissue, the healing process will keep being interrupted, resulting in more scar tissue and weaker tissues in the end. Your physiotherapist can help you to determine how long you may need to rest, depending on the injury.

## **ICE**

The sooner the better. All it takes is 10-15 minutes of ice 3x a day to help to decrease the pain, swelling and the inflammation. Continue this for the first 72 hours.

## **COMPRESSION**

Use a suitable compression bandage or cohesive bandage to keep a moderate pressure on the area. This will help to limit the amount of swelling that will occur. Tighter is not always better, because this will constrict the blood flow completely.

## **ELEVATION**

Keep the injured area elevated above the level of your heart to allow gravity to move the swelling away from the injury, decreasing pain

## **REFERRAL**

If you are unsure of how bad the injury is, seek medical advice from your physiotherapist or doctor, they can then refer you to have other investigations such as x-rays or sonars or to see a specialist if it is required

*If need be, Paracetamol (Panado) can be taken for pain but new research shows that NSAIDS (non-steroidal anti-inflammatories) like myprodol, voltaren and coxflams reduce the quality of healing tissue in the long term (the swelling will decrease faster but at 6 weeks after the injury, the healed tissue will be weaker and predispose you to reinjury).*

