

Michigan rehab clinic offers tips for heat versus cold treatment for sprains and strains

By

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“ As spring arrives and your activity levels increase, chances are you may have some sore muscles and joints after that project is completed so what should you use, heat or cold treatment? ”

For Immediate Release:

The immediate application of ice is the most accepted treatment choice for sprains and/or strains. Cold (cryotherapy) is an effective treatment because cold causes the blood vessels to narrow, which decreases the blood flow to the injured area. Cold also lowers the muscles temperature which diminishes the oxygen and nutrient needs of the muscles as well as assisting in decreasing swelling, scar tissue, pain and speeds up the injury recovery time.

Tips for using ice: Ice should be applied for the first 48-72 hours post injury. Common sites that may require longer applications are the ankle, knee, elbow and shoulder. Ice should be applied until a feeling of numbness set in at approximately 15-20 minutes and can be reapplied every two hours, using a damp towel covering the skin to protect it.

Heat is an effective treatment because it increases muscle temperature and blood flow, which increases the oxygen and flow of nutrients to the damaged muscle and helps facilitate healing in the later stages. Tips for using heat: Heat can be applied after 96 hours in most cases however, if there are any signs of swelling and/or inflammation present, do not use heat. The application of moist heat is more effective than dry heat (i.e. hot shower or bath) and has deeper penetration. Heat should be applied for 20-25 minutes and can be applied one or twice a daily.

Important Note: If you are in doubt as to whether to use heat versus cold, it is safer to use cold especially for an acute injury or problem.

Every patient must have a prescription for rehab from their physician. A patient has the choice to go where they know they will get the best treatment for their specific goals. Your insurance coverage will be verified and your first appointment will be scheduled within 24 hours. Remember, it is all about you!

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For more information:

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