



Tips on Treating Strains and Sprains

What is a Strain?

Overstretching or overexerting some part of the muscle. It can be in the muscle belly or the tendon.

What is a Sprain?

Overstretching, tear or injury to the fibers of a ligament.

How do you prevent Strains and Sprains?

- Warm up before stretching (ideally, break a sweat)
- Develop muscle strength - the muscles protect ligament fibers
- Maintain joint flexibility by practicing regular stretching, a "cold" muscle is more susceptible to injury
- Ask your healthcare provider for advice on a stretching program

How do you treat Strains and Sprains?

- RICE - Rest, Ice, Compression and Elevation (above the heart)
- RICE can be used for the first 72-96 hours. Don't rush to use heat if you still have swelling or inflammation
- R = Take a break from the stressful activity, allow the joint and/or muscle to rest
- I = Apply an ice pack to the affected area for intervals of 15-20 minutes. This is a maximum time for one ice application. Ice can be reapplied after the affected area has returned to normal temperature. Icing can occur every 1 ½- 2 hours
- C = Compression can be done with an ace wrap or elastic support over the area. Slight pressure should be applied to the affected area, wrapping from distal to proximal. Don't wear it when sleeping.
- E = Elevation needs to be above the heart (if lying down). Utilize a pillow or wedge if possible.

If symptoms persist for more than 24 hours, seek medical attention.

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