

RICE

Most injuries to bones, joints and muscles benefit from **Rest, Ice, Compression and Elevation**.

Rest means stopping the activity that caused the injury and staying off it until a doctor tells you it is o.k.

Ice means applying cold to the injury as soon as you can once the injury has been immobilized. The cold narrows the blood vessels, reducing pain, swelling and bruising. Use a commercial cold pack, an improvised ice pack or a cold compress. Apply cold over the entire injured area – 15 minutes on, 15 minutes off. Never put ice or an ice bag directly on the skin, always have a layer of cloth between the ice and the skin. Do not use cold when there is an open wound or if the skin is pushed up from underneath by an injured bone.

Compression means using a bandage to apply compression to the injury. This will help limit swelling. An elasticized roller bandage works well, if put on the right way. Check your First Aid Manual to learn how. After you secure the bandage, check to see if the circulation has been cut off and recheck circulation every few minutes. If the bandage is or becomes too tight, rewrap the injury using less compression. Do not use compression on a fracture, or if the injured person has a disease of the blood vessels or diabetes.

Elevation means raising the injured part – preferably to a level above the heart. Elevation helps to reduce swelling and makes it easier for fluids to drain away from the injury. This in turn, helps reduce swelling. Do not elevate a 'locked' joint.

Use RICE while waiting for medical help to arrive or while transporting injured person to medical help. RICE is especially useful for minor sprains and strains when the casualty is not convinced the injury is bad enough to see a doctor. Even the most minor injuries will benefit from RICE.

Prepared: September 2002

**** Provided as general information only. A physician should always be consulted for diagnosis and treatment of any and all medical conditions***