



Basic Acute Injury Management

Do's

Appropriate treatment of a soft tissue injury (ligament, muscle, joint capsule) in the first 24 to 48 hours can significantly affect **recovery time**, and decrease the amount of game time lost. When a soft tissue structure is injured, **blood vessels are also damaged** which, if not managed properly, leads to blood accumulating around damaged tissue and compression of adjoining tissues. This compression causes secondary hypoxic (lack of oxygen) injury and further damage. R.I.C.E. is an acronym summarising the most appropriate method to decrease bleeding at the injury site.

R.I.C.E. PRINCIPLES

- ✓ **Relative Rest:**
Avoid loading, stretching or aggravating injured tissue.
- ✓ **Ice:**
Ice decreases the blood flow to the injured tissue.
Ice should be applied to injured tissue until the skin is numb (approximately 15 minutes), then removed. This should be repeated every 1-2 hours for 2-3 days. If ice is left on longer than this, it can have adverse effects such as ice burn or nerve damage.
- ✓ **Compression:**
When possible, compression with a tubigrip or bandage should be applied to reduce bleeding. Bandaging should start distal (furthest part from the trunk) to the injury with the bandage overlapping. The bandage should be firm, but not so firm that it causes pain. Remove the bandage/compression overnight.
- ✓ **Elevation:**
When possible, the injured area should be elevated. If the injury is in the lower limb, it should be elevated above the groin.
- ✓ **Pain relief:**
It is important you manage pain in all phases of recovery, especially in the first 24-48 hours. Analgesics, such as paracetamol (Panadol), are safe for most people and easily accessible. The pharmacist is a good first contact for basic advice during this time.

Don'ts

In the first 24 to 48 hours, certain things will increase bleeding and may later delay recovery. It is recommended you avoid;

- ✗ Heat rubs
- ✗ Alcohol
- ✗ Moderate/intense activity
- ✗ Vigorous soft tissue work/massage