



## **Ouchie! Proper Injury Treatment**

**Happy Friday [SweatCommunity!](#)**

First, an update on my knee surgery... It's been about 3 weeks post-surgery and I'm feeling great! I've started riding the stationary bike and even some light jogging. Look out Adrian Peterson, I'm coming for you!

Alright, onto today's lesson...

If there is one thing you take from today, it's this: If you strain or pull a muscle, DO NOT STRETCH IT IMMEDIATELY AFTER!!!

When a muscle like our hamstring or back is pulled, it means our muscles have been overstretched and there are muscular-fiber tears. So when you go to stretch it out (this is most people's first reaction), you are actually stretching the tear and making it bigger. You need to apply ice on and off for the next 2 days. Once the pain and swelling has subsided, you can begin to stretch it, but only once you are thoroughly warmed up already.

## **Injury Treatment: When to Ice vs Heat**

### **Types of Injuries:**

Acute injuries are sudden, sharp, traumatic injuries that occur immediately (or within hours) and cause pain (possibly severe pain). Most often acute injuries result from some sort of impact or trauma such as a fall, sprain, or collision and it's pretty obvious what caused the injury. Acute injuries also cause common signs and symptoms of injury such as pain, tenderness, redness, skin that is warm to the touch, swelling and inflammation. If you have swelling, you have an acute injury.

Chronic injuries, on the other hand, can be subtle and slow to develop. They sometimes come and go, and may cause dull pain or soreness. They are often the result of overuse, but sometimes develop when an acute injury is not properly treated and doesn't heal.

### **When to Ice:**

Cold therapy with ice is the best immediate treatment for acute injuries because it reduces swelling and pain. Ice is a vaso-constrictor (it causes the blood vessels to narrow) and it limits internal bleeding at the injury site. Cold therapy is also helpful in treating some overuse injuries or chronic pain in athletes. An athlete who has chronic

knee pain that increases after running may want to ice the injured area after each run to reduce or prevent inflammation.

**When to Heat:**

Heat is generally used for chronic injuries or injuries that have no inflammation or swelling. Sore, stiff, nagging muscle or joint pain is ideal for the use of heat therapy. Athletes with chronic pain or injuries may use heat therapy before exercise to increase the elasticity of joint connective tissues and to stimulate blood flow. Heat can also help relax tight muscles or muscle spasms.

Don't apply heat after exercise. After a workout, ice is the better choice on a chronic injury. Because heat increases circulation and raises skin temperature, you should not apply heat to acute injuries or injuries that show signs of inflammation. Safely apply heat to an injury 15 to 20 minutes at a time and use enough layers between your skin and the heating source to prevent burns. Moist heat is best, so you could try using a hot wet towel. You can buy special athletic hot packs or heating pads if you use heat often. Never leave heating pads on for more than 20 minutes at a time or while sleeping.

<b>INJURY</b>	<b>ICE</b>	<b>HEAT (MOIST HEAT PAD)</b>
PULLED MUSCLE	2-8x per day for 15 mins for 2-4 days (this is the healing stage)	Before practice/game (after healing stage is complete)
SPRAINED JOINTS	2-8x per day for 15 mins until swelling subsides	N/A
CONTUSION	Until swelling subsides	N/A
GENERAL SORENESS	Post-activity to reduce soreness	Heat will relax tight muscles before activity
MUSCLE SPASMS/CRAMPS	N/A	Heat to warm-up muscles before activity. For severe cramps, use heat to relax muscles post-activity
CHRONIC ARTHRITIS OR JOINT PAIN	If it relieves symptoms, ice is fine	Heat is typically better for arthritic joints. Use as needed.

**If all else fails, a kiss from Mama fixes all boo-boos,**

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