

# Immediate Injury Management



To reduce time spent on the sideline from a soft tissue injury, follow the **RICER** and **No HARM** regime.

**R REST**  
Rest the injured player and injured body part. Further activity will aggravate the injury.

**I ICE** (Ice/Medichill/Cold Compress)  
Apply for a maximum of 20 mins every 2 hours. If using ice, wrap in towel or bag before applying, as ice burns may occur.

**C COMPRESSION**  
Apply a firm compression bandage above and below the injury site to reduce swelling.

**E ELEVATION**  
Raise the injured area above the level of the heart to reduce swelling and pain.

**R REFERRAL**  
Early referral to a sports physician or sports physiotherapist will provide specific diagnosis and an appropriate rehabilitation program.

Remember to avoid these **HARM** factors

**H HEAT** Increases bleeding to the injured area.

**A ALCOHOL** Increases swelling.

**R RUNNING** Increases blood flow and can make the injury worse.

**M MASSAGE** Increases bleeding. Avoid for the first 72 hours.

## Remember to be sport safe with soft tissue injuries

- The biggest risk factor for soft tissue injury is a previous injury. A player returning from injury or illness should preferably be excluded from activity until declared fit to play by a trained health professional.
- Once players have suffered a soft tissue injury, it is important to ensure that they are fully rehabilitated prior to returning to either training or competition.
- Although the use of sports tape or a brace will help support the joint, neither product should take the place of an appropriate rehabilitation program.

For further information on soft tissue injuries, please contact:

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### ALWAYS CONSULT A TRAINED PROFESSIONAL

The information in this resource is general in nature and is only intended to provide a summary of the subject matter covered. It is not a substitute for medical advice and you should always consult a trained professional practicing in the area of sports medicine in relation to any injury. You use or rely on information in this resource wholly at your own risk and no party involved in the production of this resource accepts any responsibility for the information contained on it or your use of that information.



# Soft Tissue Injuries

A practical guide to prevention and management



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ICE PADS for SOFT TISSUE INJURIES



## What is a soft tissue injury?

The most common injury in sport is a soft tissue injury. A soft tissue injury generally involves one or more of the following structures:

### Muscle

Muscles are made up of fibres that shorten and lengthen to produce movement of a joint. Muscles are attached to bones by tendons.

### Tendon

Tendons are tough bands of slightly elastic connective tissue that connect muscle to bone.

### Ligament

Ligaments are strong bands of inelastic connective tissue that connect bone to bone.

## Types of soft tissue injuries

### ACUTE INJURY

Injuries that occur from a known or sometimes unknown incident. *Signs and symptoms develop rapidly*

#### Bruise (Contusion, Cork)

Bruises are caused by a direct force applied to the body such as being kicked or making contact with a player and results in compression and bleeding into the soft tissue (haematoma).

*Swelling  
Discolouration*

#### Sprain

Sprains are caused when the joint is forced beyond its normal range of motion resulting in the overstretching or tearing of the ligament that supports the joint.

*Swelling  
Loss of power or ability to bear weight  
Possible discolouration & bruising  
Sudden onset of pain*

#### Strain

Strains are caused by muscles over-stretching or contracting too quickly, resulting in a partial or complete tear of the muscle and or tendon fibres.

*Swelling  
Possible discolouration & bruising  
Pain on movement*

### OVERUSE INJURY

Overuse injuries occur as a result of repetitive friction, pulling, twisting or compression that develops over time.

*Signs and symptoms develop slowly  
Inflammation  
Pain*



## Immediate management

The first 48-72 hours are vital in the effective management of any soft tissue injury. Injuries managed effectively in the first 2-3 days will reduce time spent on the sidelines.

The immediate management should involve the RICER (Rest, Ice, Compression, Elevation, Referral) regime.

This regime should be used for all ligament sprains, muscle strains and muscle bruises (corks etc.), in fact, any bumps and bruises, which occur in sport or physical activity.

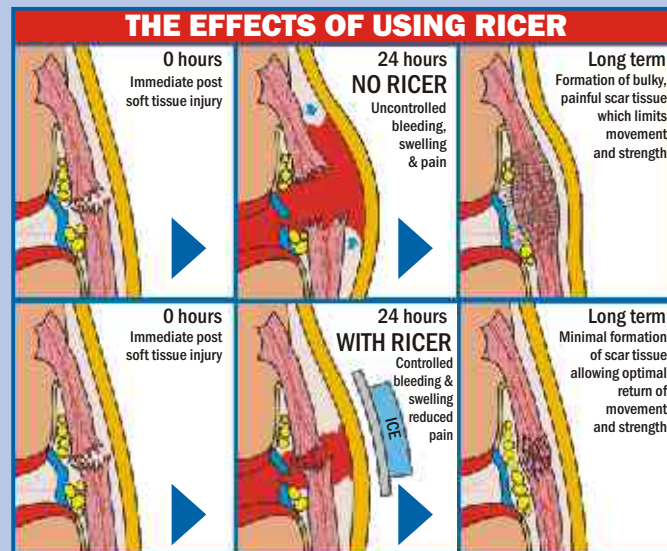


Diagram courtesy of Dr Barry Oakes, MB, BS, MD, F.A.S.M.F. Senior Lecturer in the Dept. of Anatomy, Monash University, Victoria.



## What can you do to prevent soft tissue injuries?

In order to reduce the risk of injury, players should;

- Complete a thorough general body warm-up, which should include sport specific muscle stretching as well as sport specific skill drills.
- Include appropriate speed work in the training program so that the muscles are capable of sustaining the high acceleration forces that occur in their specific sport.
- Maintain high levels of cardiovascular fitness and muscular endurance to prevent fatigue.
- Stretch and cool down after every training session and competition.
- Include appropriate stretching and strengthening exercises in the weekly training program(s).
- Undertake a training program prior to the start of the season to adequately prepare prior to participation in sport.
- Wear appropriate footwear that is well fitted and provides adequate support and traction for the playing surface.
- Protective equipment, such as shin guards, mouthguards and helmets, help decrease the risk of injury.
- Playing surfaces and the sporting environment should be safe and cleared of any potentially dangerous objects. The playing surface should be well lit, with players having time to adjust to the different playing and training environment.

