

# Managing Sprains and Strains

This playbook describes the standard R.I.C.E. method—Rest, Ice, Compression, Elevation—for treating sprains and strains. It also advises on when to seek professional medical attention for such injuries.

## Step 1: **Rest**

Cease any activities that may cause pain or discomfort to the affected area. Keep the injured limb immobile to prevent further damage.

## Step 2: **Ice**

Apply ice or a cold pack to the injured area for 20 minutes every two hours. This helps reduce swelling and numbs pain. Avoid applying ice directly to the skin; instead, wrap it in a towel or cloth.

## Step 3: **Compression**

Wrap the injured area with an elastic medical bandage to decrease swelling. The wrap should be snug but not too tight as to cut off circulation.

## Step 4: **Elevation**

Elevate the injured limb above the level of your heart as often as possible. This helps reduce swelling by facilitating venous return to the circulatory system.

## Step 5: **Medical Attention**

Seek medical attention if there is significant swelling, you cannot bear weight on the affected area, you hear a popping noise at the time of injury, or if the pain and swelling persist despite self-care.

## **General Notes**

### **Ice Precaution**

Never apply ice for longer than 20 minutes at a time to prevent frostbite and other cold-related injuries.

### **Compression Caution**

If the bandage causes numbness, tingling, or increased pain, or if the skin below the bandage turns blue or feels cold, the bandage may be too tight and should be reapplied with less tension.

### **Pain Management**

Over-the-counter pain relievers, such as ibuprofen or acetaminophen, may be used to alleviate pain. However, you should consult with a healthcare provider if you are unsure about their use.