R.I.C.E. (Treating Soft Tissue Injury)

R.I.C.E. is an acronym helpful to remember interventions to provide first-aid treatment for soft tissue injuries and related inflammation. R stands for rest, I is for ice, C for compression, and E for elevation.
IMPORTANT NOTE: While the use of R.I.C.E is still widespread and commonly used, the theory known as "R.I.C.E" is considered outdated, lacking any evidence to support its positive effects on pain, swelling, or patient function. Nevertheless, physicians worldwide continue to learn and apply the R.I.C.E approach. Although most recent studies focus on ankle sprains, it is reasonable to extend the findings to other types of acute soft tissue injuries. Modern teachings now discourage physicians from using the R.I.C.E protocol for treating acute ankle sprains but rather encourage them to explore alternative options such as early mobilization and functional rehabilitation. These approaches have the potential to expedite recovery and facilitate a quicker return to sports activities.



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Rest

Rest

Movement should be restricted in musculoskeletal injuries, in particular when a severe injury has occurred. If the injury is minor, however, beginning rehabilitation as soon as possible may actually hasten recovery. Always ensure pain or discomfort is not increased with movement.

Ice

Ice-block

Cold application decreases swelling, pain, and congestion in the inflamed or injured area. Cooling an injured area is acceptable for short periods to provide relief, keeping application times to no longer than 10 minutes. After a 20 minute break, this process may be repeated once or twice. Keep in mind that ice causes blood vessels to constrict, which prevents the cells important for inflammation and healing to get to the area.

Compression

Compression by Vice

Direct pressure reduces vasodilating effects and the development of edema, along with compression bandages that provide support to injured joints, tendons, and muscles. The application of compression in these instances should be applied by a trainer, coach or doctor familiar with these injuries. Specific compression and tension is required to avoid further injury.

Elevation

High Elevation

When an extremity is elevated above the level of the heart, edema is reduced at the injury site by increasing venous and lymphatic return.

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