

FIRST AID TIPS: SPRAINS AND STRAINS

Sprains and strains are common injuries that may result from exercise or other physical activity. Sprains are stretched or torn ligaments and strains are overstretched muscles.

Relieve the swelling and pain caused by these injuries with the following self-care measures:

- Don't try to "work through" the pain - you'll only make a sprain or strain worse.
- Remember **RICE** when applying self-care measures:
Rest the injured joint.
Ice helps reduce swelling - apply ice 10 min. at a time.
Compression - wrap firmly but not too tightly.
Elevate the injured area to allow fluids to drain away from the joint.
- As a general rule, ice should be used during the first two to three days after the injury occurs. This keeps swelling down. After this, heat may be applied to ease pain and promote healing. Ask your doctor what is best for your situation.
- Take ibuprofen for pain and swelling.
- Seek medical attention if: you can't move the joint, pain or swelling is severe, or injured area is numb, tingling, cold, or changing color.
- The best medicine is prevention: Keep active to help stay limber. Gentle stretching and walking offer good health benefits. When exercising, always warm up and warm down after. (used to be cool down).

