

STAGE 1: COMPRESSION

Compression should be applied to an injury as soon as possible to minimise the space available for swelling to become established. The larger the injured area, the time taken for the swelling to reduce will be longer.

Wherever possible the compression should be removed 2 - 3 times per day and the injured limb actively and gently moved 2 - 3 times, through its pain free range. The compression should then be reapplied. This type of compression can and should be retained overnight but removed and reapplied if it causes any numbness, tingling, loss of sensation or discolouration of the skin below it.

STAGE 2: ELEVATION

Wherever possible, an injured area should be elevated above heart level. If this is not feasible then the highest position of elevation possible should be obtained and maintained. Elevation will limit excessive swelling, encourage drainage and combined with compression is extremely effective and beneficial for the prevention of swelling following acute trauma.

STAGE 3: COOLING

The direct application of ice to an injured part **does not** prevent or stop swelling! Sustained cooling combined with compression (and elevation) has the beneficial effect of providing pain relief.

The cooling can be applied through cold/ ice packs wrapped around the **outside** of the compression or soaking it with cold water. Where possible, the cooling should be applied for the period that the compression is applied.



PLUS: REDUCE ACTIVITIES - MODIFIED REST

Modified rest, in this instance, does not mean doing nothing at all. It means modifying activities to prevent further trauma or re-injury. This is important as re-injury would change the physiological responses and increase the risk of it becoming a chronic problem. Therefore, a sensible approach to reducing activities must be undertaken and the advice of gently moving the injured limb through its pain free range, as described previously, should be followed. For the remainder of the time the injured part should be elevated when and wherever possible.

AND: PROTECT THE INJURED AREA

It is important to protect the injured area to prevent further trauma or re-injury. Therefore, immediate removal from the activity where the injury occurred is advised. An acute injury is one that has been subjected to a specific "one off" incident whereas re-injury or repetitive trauma will have a different response and make it potentially a chronic problem from the start. Hence the need to protect the injured area from further injury or repetitive trauma.

AND: REMEMBER DO NO HARM

Always remember do no **HARM** until you see a qualified medical professional;

- No **Heat**
- No **Alcohol**
- No **Running**
- No **Massage**

The above information has been taken from **The Society of Sports Therapists Public Advice Section** for your information

