

## Learning About RICE (Rest, Ice, Compression, and Elevation)

---

### What is RICE?

RICE is a way to care for an injury to help relieve pain and swelling. It may also help with healing and flexibility. RICE stands for:

- **R**est and protect the injured or sore area.
- **I**ce or a cold pack used as soon as possible.
- **C**ompression, or wrapping the injured or sore area with an elastic bandage.
- **E**levation (propping up) the injured or sore area.

### How do you do RICE?

You can use RICE for home treatment when you have general aches and pains or after an injury or surgery.

#### Rest

- Do not put weight on the injury for at least 24 to 48 hours.
- Use crutches for a badly sprained knee or ankle.
- Support a sprained wrist, elbow or shoulder with a sling.

#### Ice

- Put ice or a cold pack on the injury right away to reduce pain and swelling. Frozen vegetables will also work as an ice pack. Put a thin cloth between the ice or cold pack and your skin. The cloth protects the injured area from getting too cold.
- Use ice for 10 to 15 minutes at a time for the first 48 to 72 hours.

#### Compression

- Use compression for sprains, strains and surgeries of the arms and legs.
- Wrap the injured area with an elastic bandage or compression sleeve to reduce swelling.
- Don't wrap it too tightly. If the area below it feels numb, tingles or feels cool, loosen the wrap.

#### Elevation

- Use elevation for areas of the body that can be propped up, such as arms and legs.
- Prop up the injured area on pillows whenever you use ice. Keep it propped up anytime you sit or lie down.
- Try to keep the injured area at or above the level of your heart. This will help reduce swelling and bruising.

For 24/7 nurse advice and general health information, call Health Link at 811.

**Current as of:** September 20, 2018

**Author:** [Healthwise Staff](https://www.healthwise.net/patientEd) <https://www.healthwise.net/patientEd>

**Medical Review:** Adam Husney, MD — Family Medicine, Kathleen Romito, MD — Family Medicine & Joan Rigg, PT, OCS — Physical Therapy