

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.

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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