

How to manage an acute sports injury

An acute injury is one that has just happened and often results in bruising and swelling. E.g. sprains, strains, muscle pulls and bruises. The aim of management at this stage is to reduce bleeding and control inflammation. The sooner you can do this the better.

An easy acronym to remember is the **PRICER** protocol. This can be used immediately after an injury.

P- Protect: If injured, stop playing in order to prevent the injury from further damage. Avoid putting weight on the injured limb

R- Rest: Refrain from activity for a few days to avoid further injury.

I- Ice: Is used to reduce swelling and inflammation. Ice the injured area for 10 minutes on and 10 minutes off. Repeat this over the next few hours and then intermittently throughout the day for the next three days.

C- Compression: Use a compression bandage to apply pressure over the area to reduce swelling. Start by wrapping the bandage from a few centimetres below the injury partially overlapping each layer working your way upwards and towards the centre of the body until you cover the injury site and a few centimetres above. See picture (Right)



E- Elevation: Elevate the limb (leg or arm) 45° above the level of your heart. The best is to lie on your back and position the limb resting on a few cushions or a chair. This will also help to minimise the swelling.

R- Referral: After three days of the **PRICER** protocol call us to book a comprehensive assessment with one of our physiotherapists



If the injury is severe and there is swelling and immediate bruising another helpful acronym to remember is: **First do NO“HARM”**

H- Heat: In the initial stages can aggravate bleeding and result in more swelling – so refrain from it in the initial stages. (48 hours).

A- Alcohol: Drinking alcohol thins the blood and would result in an increase in bleeding/swelling

R - Rubbing: Increases the local blood flow, which may also aggravate any bleeding/swelling

M- Movement: although movement is an important part of rehabilitating an injury in the initial stages it increases the blood supply and can result in an aggravation of bleeding - so it's best to refrain from this initially.