

# ICE VS HEAT



**Note:** The information listed is intended as a general guideline. If you have questions or concerns related to your own injury or condition, please speak to your healthcare professional. Please exercise caution when using heat and/or cold applications, especially if you experience decreased sensation in certain areas of your body.

## How it works



- Reduces blood flow to area of injury by constricting blood vessels
- Reduces pain, swelling, blood loss



- Increases blood flow to area of injury/pain by dilating blood vessels
- Increased blood flow can improve flexibility of tight tissues

## When to use



- Use at the time of injury and in the early days/weeks after an injury



- Use after the initial pain and swelling has subsided
- Use in a long standing condition

## Types of injuries



- Sprains (i.e. ankle, knee, wrist)
- Recent whiplash
- Recent surgery such as a total knee replacement or ligament repair
- Recent muscle strain or tear



- Low back pain
- Neck tension
- Arthritis pain in the hands and fingers
- Knee arthritis

## When to avoid



- Areas with reduced sensation or blood flow
- Avoid prior to tasks that require balance and coordination



- Recent injury, open wounds, areas that are reddened, bruised and swollen
- Areas of reduced sensation (“numb spots”)

## How to apply



- Wrap a cold pack or bag of frozen vegetables in a towel to protect the skin from frost bite
- Apply for 10-15 minutes, (no longer than 20) every hour
- Remove cold if skin begins to appear white or frost bitten



- Use an off the shelf microwavable heat source, hot water bottle or electrical heating pad
- Take a warm bath or shower
- Heat can be applied for 15-30 minutes