

Sports Injury Article - Ice or Heat an Injury?

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Ice is best used immediately for an acute injury as it will reduce swelling and pain. It will also cause the blood vessels to constrict. This will help limit internal bleeding at the site of the injury. Use ice wrapped in a thin towel & apply to the injury site for about 10 to 15 minutes. Then allow the skin to warm up again (about 1 hour) before you can ice again. This is best done for 3 days after the



injury and several times a day. You can also ice sore muscles after training to help recovery. Never ice before training you need your muscles to be warmed up and flexible. A very good way to ice is to use water frozen in a paper cup. Peel away paper and use the ice to massage the area you must keep it moving. It melts like mad so you'll need a towel to catch the water.

Heat is best used on a chronic injury and injuries with no inflammation or swelling. Stiff, sore, nagging muscles and joint pain is ideal for heat therapy. It's best used before exercise as it will help to increase elasticity of joint tissues and stimulate blood flow. You should not apply heat after exercise or if an injury show signs of inflammation. Moist heat is



best, use a hot wet towel to apply to the area. You can also use hot packs or heating pads. Never use heating pads for more than 20 minutes. If your injury does not improve within 48 hours you should see your doctor.

So heat before exercise and ice after exercise.