



HEAT vs. ICE



RULE OF THUMB: Heat is for muscles. Ice is for injuries

WHAT IT DOES

Heat promotes muscle relaxation and can increase range of motion. It **opens blood vessels to increase blood flow**, relaxes muscles and helps alleviate pain.

WHEN TO USE IT

Heat is a great way **to help loosen up tight joints and tight muscles**. It is also a good method of pain relief for tension headaches and other chronic conditions. Always wait 48-72 hours before considering heat therapy.

When in doubt use ice.

HELPFUL TIPS

- > Treat for no longer than 20 minutes at a time.
- > Do not lie on a hot pack to avoid falling asleep and potentially burning yourself.
- > Do not use heat if you have no feeling in that affected part of your body.
- > NEVER use heat if there is swelling or bruising.
- > Do not apply heat directly to skin, use a thin towel.
- > Do not use heat if you have poor circulation, or if you have diabetes.
- > Wait 1 hour in between heat treatments.

WHAT IT DOES

Ice calms down damaged tissue and **slows down the blood flow** to an injury, to reduce swelling, inflammation and controls the pain.

WHEN TO USE IT

Ice should be used **right after an injury** or activity that aggravates a chronic condition. Ice is good for migraine headaches, bumps, sprains, and strains that may occur with sports, slips and falls, or lifting. Cold therapy is also helpful in treating some overuse injuries or chronic pain in athletes. **When in doubt use ICE!**

HELPFUL TIPS

- > Treat for no longer than 20 minutes at a time.
- > During treatment check skin every 5 minutes to make sure there is no damage, such as freezer burn (skin would become reddened or blistered, just as when burned with heat).
- > Do not apply heat directly to skin, use a thin towel.
- > Wait 1 hour in between cold treatments.