

Evans Chiropractic Health Center

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WHY ICE?

Most people know that when you sprain your ankle you should apply ice, during this acute phase for the first 24-72 hours. Why then do people reach for heat when they hurt their back?

Ice is very effective in the management of back pain. In fact, ice is the preferred treatment for acute pain.

Cold produces an initial contraction of blood vessels, which decreases inflammation and swelling. However, it later produces an increase in blood flow to cleanse that area and restore nutrition to the tissues. Cold minimizes muscle spasm and decreases pain by slowing nerve conduction of pain impulses. The benefits of cold also last longer than those of heat.

Heat, used too soon, actually increases pain because it can increase swelling and pressure on the spinal nerves.

In order for ice to be effective in the management of pain, the area must be cold enough to become numb. There are several ways to accomplish this:

1. Place crushed or cubed ice in a plastic bag and place directly over painful area for approximately 15-20 minutes, then remove. Wait 40-60 minutes, then re-apply ice to keep the area cold.
2. Keep 4 oz. Paper cups of ice in the freezer. When needed, tear off top of cup to expose the ice approximately 1 inch. Rub this over the painful area with smooth continuous strokes.

After the first two or three days of pain, moist heat or ice may be used for pain relief.

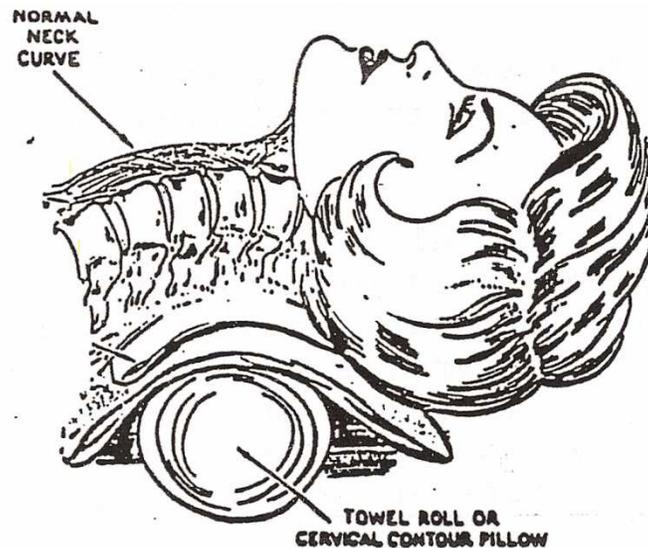
NEXT TIME YOUR BACK HURTS...

SEE YOUR CHIROPRACTOR AND TRY ICE INSTEAD OF HEAT. YOU WILL BE SURPRISED!

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Instead of using a pillow every time that you lay down, try using a towel, following these simple instructions:

1. Take a towel (size determined by whether you are supporting the cervical area or lumbar area) and fold it in half.
2. Roll the towel to a comfortable size so that the back of the head touches the bed.
3. To increase the stability and durability of this newly rolled towel, it helps to put rubber bands on each end. One good rubber band on each end should be sufficient.
4. Place the rolled towel under the appropriate area and use it as directed to help restore your spinal curve.
5. Use is for at least 15-20 minutes every day.
6. The use of ice may be applied to the upper shoulder area simultaneously.
7. You may find it even more comfortable if you place 1 or 2 pillows under your knees to reduce the amount of pressure on your lower back.