

Should You Ice an Injury?

The other day, I went to the grocery store with my little brother. While loading the car, I turned around, shut the trunk, and in a lapse of judgment, took my eyes off of my 4-year-old brother and accidentally hit his head with the trunk of the car. He had leaned his head forward to look inside the trunk and I had not noticed.

I picked my brother up and put him on the hood of the car as I examined his injury and tried to decide what to do. A store employee had seen the whole thing happen and offered him some ice. I quickly thanked him and took the ice, holding it to my brother's head as I thought to myself, "Are you even supposed to ice injuries?" I took the ice to appease onlookers, but found myself, as I have with so many things in the past year, wondering if that was, in fact, the right thing to do. The more I learn about health the more I learn that most things I thought I knew were not true.

Related: *What Causes Chronic Inflammation, and How To Stop It For Good*

After telling my dad about the whole thing, he confirmed that ice was in fact, not necessary or desirable in most cases. So, when should you use ice?

As far as temporary pain relief, icing an injury is better for your health than taking something like ibuprofen or Tylenol. In some cases, it may be beneficial to ice. For example, when you need to avoid swelling and inflammation for mobility reasons like sports events where one has to continue participating, ice makes sense. A pitcher, for instance, may need to ice their shoulder in order to numb pain and prevent swelling so they have the mobility to continue pitching. However, once the event is over, it's better off to the body heal naturally without ice.

When we injure ourselves, the body's response is typically inflammation, swelling, and pain. During inflammation, blood clots form, and vessels constrict to stem the flow of blood from damaged tissue, while healthier vessels signal the body to get to work repairing the damage. Local nerve endings become more sensitive as a way of letting the body know what it should and should not do.

All these responses are very natural and necessary. However, when we ice injuries, we slow blood flow to the area and prevent inflammation and swelling. In other words, ice can slow down the healing process.

Related: *How To Heal Your Gut*

While many people still learn the "RICE" method in school, today the doctor who wrote the RICE method no longer recommends it.

*When I wrote my best-selling Sportsmedicine Book in 1978, I coined the term **RICE** (Rest, Ice, Compression, Elevation) for the treatment of athletic injuries (Little Brown and Co., page 94). Ice has been a standard treatment for injuries and sore muscles because it helps to relieve pain caused by injured tissue. Coaches have used my "RICE" guideline for decades, but now it appears that both Ice and complete Rest may delay healing, instead of helping.*

Why Ice Delays Recovery -Dr.mirkin.com

Additionally, many pro-ice studies are based on anecdotal and/or circumstantial evidence while many other studies have come to inconclusive results on cryogenic therapy. One study done in 2008 by the Emergency Medicine Journal came to the conclusion "There is insufficient evidence to suggest that cryotherapy improves clinical outcome in the management of soft tissue injuries." Another study done by The Journal of Athletic Training, in 2012 found similar results saying

“Insufficient evidence is available from randomized controlled trials to determine the relative effectiveness of RICE therapy for acute ankle sprains in adults.”

Next time you injure yourself, in most situations, you’ll likely be better off letting the body do its thing without the interference of ice.

When intimation is chronic condition, we recommend: *Best Supplements To Kill Candida and Everything Else You Ever Wanted To Know About Fungal Infections*

Sources:

- *Why Ice Delays Recovery* -Dr.mirkin.com
- *What Is the Evidence for Rest, Ice, Compression, and Elevation Therapy in the Treatment of Ankle Sprains in Adults?* -The Journal of Athletic training
- *Is ice right? Does cryotherapy improve outcome for acute soft tissue injury?* -Emergency medical journal