

# R.I.C.E. (Rest, Ice, Compression, Elevation)

Sprains and other soft tissue injuries can be treated with rice—but not the kind you eat. R.I.C.E. stands for Rest, Ice, Compression, and Elevation. This combination can help limit pain and swelling while you recover. First, rest: Don't put pressure on the affected area. Using crutches can take weight off an injured foot, ankle, knee, or leg. Braces or splints may help as well.

*“Rest is important during your initial part of recovery, but over resting can also be a problem. So, it's always important to talk with your provider as to when you should start moving about again.”*

Next, ice, which may help bring down swelling. You can use an ice pack, ice cubes in a sealable bag, or even a frozen package of vegetables. Just be sure to wrap it in a towel to protect your skin. Hold it to the injured area for up to 20 minutes at a time, every hour or two for the first 48 hours -- or as your provider recommends. Compression: Wrap the area in a bandage or compression sleeve to reduce swelling. Make it snug, but not so tight that it causes numbness, tingling, or skin discoloration. Finally, elevation: Keep the injured body part raised above your heart by propping it on a pillow.

Get medical help if you have: Severe pain, fever, numbness or instability in the joint, or signs of infection, including redness or warmth in the affected area. Your provider may recommend physical therapy to help strengthen the affected area and reduce the risk of re-injury.

*“Sprains can take time to heal. Check with your provider before returning to exercise and other activities to make sure it's safe and start slowly.”*