

## Application of Cold

**Effects:** Cold can reduce pain and swelling. Cold reduces the ability for nerves to send pain signals to the brain by crowding them out with temperature signals. Cold shuts off excessive inflammation and causes an increase in circulation after the cold is removed, resulting in decreased swelling and faster healing.

**When:** Cold should be applied for at least the first three days after an injury. After that, cold should be used if the area has an “angry” or irritated feel to it or if swelling or pain returns after activity.

**Precaution:** Be very cautious if applying cold to an area where you have poor circulation or decreased sensation. Seek advice from a medical professional if you aren’t sure if cold is safe for you.



## Ice Massage

**Procedure:** Rub ice on the affected area in small circles until the skin is slightly numb to the touch. Do not hold the ice still, keep it moving the whole time or it can cause a burn. Protect the hand that is holding the ice with a cloth or other barrier. This should take 3-5 minutes depending upon the size of the area. If it takes more than 10 minutes to reach numbness, the area may be too large for this technique and you should use a cold pack.

**Tips:** Freeze a dixie cup and tear off the extra paper for a handle, add popsicle sticks to an ice tray to give yourself a handle for the ice, or use a washcloth to hold the ice. For painful or tired feet, try freezing a bottle of water (only 2/3 full or it might explode!) or a golf ball and roll it under your foot.



## Cold Pack

**When to use:** Cold packs are good for larger areas that are painful.

**Procedure:** Wrap the pack in a damp or dry towel (your preference as long as there is a barrier) and applied to the painful area for about 15-20 minutes.

**Tips:** Make your own gel pack! Mix 2 parts water with 1 part (i.e. if you want a 3 cup pack, use 2 cups of water and 1 cup of alcohol) rubbing alcohol and freeze in a water-tight bag.