

Wellness Weekly

Listen to Your Heart



Injury Recovery 101

"I have learned that rest and recovery is your friend." — Courteney Lowe, professional cyclist

Did you know that minor strains and sprains can often be successfully treated with some self-care at home? Whether you strained your back lifting something too heavy or sprained your ankle jogging, taking the time to allow your body to rest and heal can be just the medicine you need. The acronym **PRICE** can be a helpful guide to caring for a minor injury.

Protection: The purpose of protection is to avoid further injury by protecting the injured structures. The types of protection, which vary depending on the injured area, include an elastic bandage, a sling, protective tape or an over-the-counter brace.

Rest: Injuries need time to heal. It's an obvious principle, but once you're hooked on exercise or used to "pushing through," it can be challenging to rest. Don't give in to temptation — you'll shortchange yourself with shortcuts. And you can rest selectively. You may have to give up tennis while your serving shoulder recovers from tendinitis, but you can still walk, jog or hike. In a curious way, an injury is often a blessing in disguise, forcing you to change your routine and acquire new skills.

Ice: Ice is an excellent anti-inflammatory that reduces swelling and pain. Apply ice or a cold pack for 10 to 15 minutes every hour that you're awake for the first two days. To make an ice pack, put ice cubes in a plastic bag that seals at the top. Wrap the bag in a thin towel or cloth. Don't put ice or an ice pack directly on the skin. After the swelling goes down, you may use cold or heat to control pain.

Compression: Depending on the location and nature of the injury, pressure may help reduce swelling and inflammation. In most cases, a simple elastic bandage will suffice. It should be snug but not too tight.

Elevation: This simple strategy uses the force of gravity to drain fluid away from injured tissues, reducing swelling, inflammation and pain. Raise the injured area above your heart level, keep the injured area from moving and limit use of the joint or limb.

If you can't put weight on the injury after 24 hours or if the injury is not improving after four days, contact your health care practitioner. Always err on the side of caution, and use common sense.

Questions about the Healthy at Hopkins rewards program?

Take a moment to review the rewards program [FAQ](#) for helpful answers to common questions about the program, the portal and how to maximize your well-being journey.

Success Story

Lindsey Plotts, Patient Services Coordinator
The Johns Hopkins Hospital

I have been focusing on sleep and lowering my blood pressure. While it's still a journey and I have a lot to do, just being more aware of my nutrition and how it affects my blood pressure has been a game changer. Music is a huge part of my life. Unwinding with some music after work and decompressing at a live show is vital for my mental state (and my blood pressure)! I also have tried breathing exercises that help decrease my stress levels, too.

Healthier Together

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the Healthy at
Hopkins portal!



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