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Please note this is a general recommendation, it is difficult to give specific advice in an article.

Soft tissue injury

Often associated with a traumatic event but can also be associated with repetitive use such as distance running, a sudden increase in running/walking mileage. Soft tissue is a term used for muscle, tendon or ligament damage. In this article we will concentrate on the clinical signs of acute injuries: pain, swelling and restricted range of movement.

Initial treatment should follow the **Protect Rest Ice Compress Elevation** guidelines (Association of Chartered Physiotherapist in Sports Medicine 2002).

Protect/rest: avoid movements mimicking the direction of injury. In some occasions a brace may be useful to limit this. Time scale for protection and rest is determined by the severity of the injury.

Ice: The use of crushed ice in a plastic bag is recommended. Placing a damp tea-towel over the area to be iced will help protect the skin. It is suggested to keep the ice pack on for at least 10 but no longer than 20 minutes. The severity of injury will determine how often the ice pack should be applied.

Compression: can be applied by use of a brace or compression bandage. Care is needed not to use high levels of compression with elevation.

Elevation: generally regarded as beneficial. There are no specific angles of elevation that have demonstrated more benefit than others.

The degree of injury will determine when to start rehabilitation and appropriate use of Non Steroidal Anti Inflammatory Drugs (Brufen etc).

Before returning to your sport

- Ensure your movement has returned to full range.

- Loss of muscle strength has been addressed.

- Any bio-mechanical flaws have been addressed. (See blog on lower limb alignment)

If in doubt contact our Physiotherapy staff who can assess and provide you with the most up to date evidence based advice to ensure a safe return to your activity/sport as early as possible. It is important to obtain a clinical diagnosis if symptoms persist or you are concerned. Your Health Rooms Chartered Physiotherapist can provide you with a diagnosis and advice.

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