



HEAT PACK

When should you use a **HOT PACK**?

Heat can increase blood flow and help restore movement to injured tissue. Warmth can also reduce joint stiffness, pain, and muscle spasms. As with cold packs, heat packs have a role in easing pain from both acute and chronic injuries, such as sprains, strains, muscle spasms, whiplash, and arthritis. Doctors often suggest using cold packs for the first day or two, and then switching to heat if the symptoms persist or become more chronic.

HOW LONG should you use a hot pack?

Apply a hot pack wrapped in a towel for 20 to 30 minutes at a time. Some physical therapists recommend alternating between heat and cold for people with painful muscle spasms or chronic problems such as arthritis.

WHEN SHOULDN'T you use A HOT PACK?

Although you may feel tempted to apply the soothing warmth of a heat pack immediately following an injury, resist the urge. You should treat any new injury with cold for a couple of days before switching to heat. Heat actually may do more damage than good until most of the swelling is gone.

COLD PACK

Who needs a **COLD PACK**?

Anyone who has ever sprained or twisted an ankle or pulled a muscle knows that cold is your friend. Bruises, insect bites, and repetitive strain injuries such as tendinitis, also respond well to treatment with cold packs. Cold therapy can help people with muscle spasms, whiplash, and various forms of arthritis as well.

How does a cold pack work?

An injury swells because fluid leaks from blood vessels; cold causes vessels to constrict, reducing their tendency to ooze. The less fluid that leaks from blood vessels, the less swelling results. Cold also eases inflammation and muscle spasms, two common sources of pain. The sooner you apply an ice pack to a sprain or strain, the sooner it can do its job reducing pain and swelling.

HOW LONG should you use a COLD PACK?

A general rule of thumb is to ice an injury over a period of 24 to 72 hours. ***Apply cold packs for periods of up to 20 minutes every two to four hours.*** When your skin starts to feel numb, it's time to give your body a break from a cold pack. **LESS IS BEST** – do not leave it on longer than 20mins as it can have the opposite effect.

WHAT PRECAUTIONS should you take when USING COLD PACKS?

Prolonged, direct contact with cold can damage skin and nerves so always be sure to wrap your cold pack in a towel. If you have diabetes, poor circulations, or blood vessel disorders, talk with a health professional before using a cold pack.