

Soft Tissue Injury

What is it?

Soft Tissue Injury describes an injury to Muscle, Tendon, or Ligament. In sport, injury to Soft Tissue most commonly occurs acutely. For example a muscle tear while running, or a ligament sprain to an ankle after a rolling incident.

What Happens?

Following a Soft Tissue Injury bleeding occurs within the damaged tissue. The bleeding starts a repair process by bringing in cells to clean up damaged tissue and build new healthy tissue. This bleeding stage lasts for the first few days and is very important as it is a catalyst for healing. Although vital for the healing process by bringing in repair cells, complete repair cannot take place until this bleeding is stopped. Prolonged bleeding can occur by inappropriate initial management and can cause excess tissue damage and scar tissue formation.

Following the cessation of the bleeding stage the tissue can now begin to repair, a process that can take several weeks.

What to Do? RICE Principles

To prevent excess bleeding beyond the first few days it is important that we reduce excess blood flow to the area. The RICE principles are a simple guideline to follow in the first 48-72 hours following a Soft Tissue Injury. The use of anti-inflammatories is not advised in this early phase as to not inhibit the normal biological repair process. For further information regarding the use of medication it is suggested that you speak to a health practitioner.

R: Rest; Avoid excessive movement and cease painful activities

I: Ice; Apply ice to the area (Approximately 20 minutes every few hours)

C: Compression; Apply compression bandage or garment

E: Elevate; Elevate limb when appropriate

Follow Up

Accurate diagnosis is important in the first few days following Soft Tissue Injury. This allows for appropriate treatment to begin aiding a quicker recovery and to prevent recurrence. It is advised that you follow up with a health practitioner as soon as possible following a Soft Tissue Injury.



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