

# ICE THERAPY

## THE BIG MISTAKE PEOPLE MAKE

We see this all the time; people with long term back complaints that have been using HEAT to relieve their bad back, neck, shoulder pain, leg pain and headaches.

This is rarely the right thing to do and here's why...

When tissues are injured, they become inflamed and it's the inflammation that:

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- Makes the pain nerves more sensitive
- Creates pressure on the local tissues

Both of which mean that you **FEEL IT MORE**. i.e. more pain!

Heat will increase the blood flow to the area and alert the body to the damage. This results in even more inflammatory fluids being sent to the region because the body perceives even more damage.

Let me ask you a question. If you had a burnt thumb, would you put it under the hot tap?

We all know that it's cold water that would calm and soothe it.

Many musculoskeletal conditions respond the same way.

Now I understand the confusion because we know that a soak in the bath can make you feel better. Yes, it can be very soothing because the muscles relax. However, this is your body protecting the region, which is appropriate. We don't want to take away protection until the condition is recovering.



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Another consideration is that the heat may have aggravated the deeper structures. This may increase the amount of inflammation and in turn cause more muscle spasm later so the problem never really gets a chance to recover. In our experience, this adds to the problem resulting in the condition becoming chronic.

So in future, when you have a bad back, neck, shoulder pain, leg pain or headaches, try using ice first.

## How to use the ice pack...

1. Take your ice pack out of the freezer and wrap in a tea towel/material pouch (DO NOT PLACE THE ICE PACK DIRECTLY ON SKIN)
2. Place ice pack on area instructed by your chiropractor/osteopath for approximately 15-20 minutes.
3. Remove the ice pack and place back in freezer
4. Repeat this every hour/ every other hour/ every three hours during the day and during the night if the pain is waking you or preventing you from sleeping.

Typically, it's around the 4th application that you'll start to notice a difference.

Ice therapy is about the frequency of your applications, not the length of time. Leaving an ice pack on for too long just freezes the area and slows down any healing.

**"Cool and Soothe, Repeatedly."**