



The Ways & Whys of Heat and Ice.

For the curious minds, here is the medical reasoning behind the mysteries of heat and ice.

Why **ice** for an injury?

Why **heat** for an injury or arthritis?

An injury that is less than 6 weeks old benefits from ice because it:

- * constricts the blood vessels reducing pain
- * cuts down on inflammation that constricts nerves space
- * limits bruising

An injury that needs heat for healing has been evident for more than 6 weeks.

- * heat increases the blood flow
- * relaxes tight muscles
- * relieves aching joints

CAUTION:

Using heat for an acute (recent) injury causes the inflammation to increase which can delay healing! Your nerves do not like to have their space restricted.

Places to go for additional information: headaches.org and arthritistoday.org

Ways you can make a cold pack:

- * Use a bag of frozen vegetables. Place it in a pillow case and apply to area.
- * Crushed ice in a zip lock bag.

Ways to make a hot pack:

- * Place uncooked rice in a cloth pouch (pillow case corner) then microwave for 1 minute and apply to area.



ICE vs. HEAT

Pain needs attention. Giving it hot or cold attention can be the trick to relief and recovery.

Identify	Problem	Solution
Arthritis	Minimal cartilage in joints (knee, shoulder, elbow, fingers, etc.)	Moist heat eases chronically stiff joints and relaxes muscles.
Gout Flare-Ups	Chronic inflammatory arthritis often in big toe, foot, ankle, knee, wrist, finger, elbow, etc.)	Ice calms flare-ups and numbs the pain.
Headache	Pain from nerves or blood vessels in the head or neck muscles	Ice numbs throbbing pain and moist heat relaxes painful neck spasms.
Strains	Pulled muscles or injured tendons in the thigh, back, calf, etc.	Ice can ease inflammation and numb pain. Heat eases stiffness after inflammation dissipates.
Sprains	Stretched or torn ligaments in joint areas such as knee, ankle, foot, elbow, etc.	Ice eases inflammation and numbs pain. Heat relieves stiffness after inflammation dissipates.
Tendonitis	Acute irritation after activities in tendons attached to joints such as shoulders, elbows, knees, wrists, heels, etc.	Ice eases inflammation and numbs pain, especially helpful if applied in the first 48 hours.
Tendinosis	Chronic pain and stiffness in tendons attached to joints.	Heat relieves stiffness after inflammation dissipates.