

Initial Injury Management

Soft tissue injuries in Rugby are part and parcel of the modern game. The quality of immediate management is an important determinant for the short and long term recovery of an injury.

Ideally, all injuries should be assessed by a medical professional in order to ascertain the severity of the injury and to give advice on the rehabilitation procedure. In the event that a more serious injury is suspected, please seek medical attention immediately.

The clinical management of soft tissue injuries places the emphasis on minimising or controlling the acute inflammation.

The **PRICE** regime is a five-step protocol used to do this.

P = Protection

The aim is to avoid further injury, minimise bleeding and prevent excessive inflammatory reaction.

This means stop playing or training immediately.

Use protective methods such as a sling, walking boot, knee brace or crutches.

R = Rest

The body is good at healing itself it just needs sufficient time to achieve this. After injury all physical activity should be stopped for 72 hours. Continuing with other exercises will cause an increase in blood flow at the site of injury, which may lead to further swelling delaying your healing.

I = Ice

Is a fantastic modality for pain relief. It may also help in the reduction of excessive inflammation around the injury.

It should **not** be placed directly onto the skin as it can burn. However can be wrapped in a damp towel.

Ice should be applied for 10minutes to the site of injury every hour. For hands or feet immersion into ice cold water is the best method. This should continue for the first 72 hours post injury.

C = Compression

Is used to minimise the bleeding and swelling in the injured area. It should not be constricting and comfortable to wear. It should cover the area above and below the site of injury.

Compression should generally be removed at night.

E = Elevation

Aims to reduce blood flow to the injury site to prevent blood pooling and swelling. This in turn helps the healing process. The ideal level of elevation should be above the player's heart.

Drugs

Basic analgesia (paracetamol) **can** be taken as it is prescribed to help alleviate the pain following injury.

Anti-inflammatory medication (nurofen, ibuprofen) should **NOT** be taken within the first 48 hours of an injury. The initial inflammatory reaction is a key part of the healing process and should not be altered.