

Information Sheet

Sprain or strain

Generally caused by a fall or other trauma a sprain is damage to the ligaments holding a joint together and a strain to the tendons attaching the muscles to the joint to allow movement. They can be a result of overtraining, lifting too heavy a weight or instability in the joint causing weakness and are recognisable as they generally bring pain, heat and swelling. Sprain and strain are often confused but the treatment is much the same although the outcome and length of recovery can vary.

NB. This information does not replace a medical diagnosis but is intended as a guide, always seek professional advice before beginning a program of self help.



Self help

- RICE –Rest, Ice, Compression, Elevation is key in the acute stage. Rest the injured limb and place an ice pack on the affected area for 20 minutes every 2 hours in the first 48 hours. A compression bandage correctly applied can help control swelling and keeping the injured part raised above the nearest joint will also help reduce swelling.
- Avoid heat including hot baths in the acute stage (first 48 hours) as this can exacerbate swelling and pain
- Keep moving in any pain free range and certainly stay as active as possible without using the injured limb
- After 48 hours begin building strength back to full use
- Lymphatic drainage massage can help reduce swelling
- Deep tissue massage once out of the acute stage can help aid healing
- Exercises to strengthen the limb can begin once the tissues are all at their normal resting length

*This is intended as a guide to how you can help improve the symptoms of sprain/strain at home, should you require any further or more specific advice please do not hesitate to contact me