

## Musculoskeletal Physiotherapy

# Use of Heat and Cold (ice) Therapy, for Injury or Pain

**Please be aware that if you have circulatory problems, poor skin sensation or if you have diabetic neuropathy, please do not apply heat or cold to the affected area. Please seek medical advice if you feel at all unsure, or have any questions.**

### Heat

The use of heat can help with pain and muscle relaxation. To protect your skin from heat burns, wrap the item in a (few layers of) towel. Leave in place for 10-15 minutes. It can be reapplied after 2 hours if you wish.

#### Examples of heat application:

- Warm shower or bath
- Bowl of warm water (for hands and feet)
- Hot water bottle (do not use boiling water)
- Wheat bag (heat in microwave to comfortable temperature before use)
- Heat pad

**Do not sit next to a fire to warm the area.**

**Heat packs should not be used on a joint or area of skin that is very inflamed or in the first 48-72 hours after an injury.**

**It is normal for the skin to become pink with either heat or ice, however, if you experience discomfort or a burning sensation remove the item immediately.**

### Cold

The use of ice can help with pain and inflammation. To protect the skin from an ice burn, place the ice pack in a wet towel. Leave in place for 10-15 minutes. It can be reapplied after 2 hours if you wish.

#### Examples of cold application:

- Bowl of cold water (for hands or feet)
- Cold, damp towel or flannel
- Bag of frozen peas
- Frozen gel pack or wheat bag
- For a small area of your body (e.g. fingers, thumb or toe) wrap an ice cube in a cloth and massage it over the area until it melts (5-10 minutes)

## Contrast Bathing

Using heat and cold together can help (may be useful to) reduce pain and inflammation.

1. Place heat on the affected area (under heat) or place in warm water for 1 minute
2. Then place cold on the affected area (under cold) or place in cold water for 2 minutes
3. Repeat this process 5 times, for a total of 15 minutes
4. Always finish in cold water and then dry the area thoroughly

**Please note:** It is normal for the skin to become pink with either heat or ice, however, if you experience discomfort or a burning sensation remove the item immediately.

### Web Address:

<http://www.cht.nhs.uk/services/clinical-services/physiotherapy-outpatients/patient-careinformation/>

### QR Code:

Scan the QR code below to take you to our website.



**If you have any comments about this leaflet or the service you have received you can contact :**

Physiotherapy Department  
Huddersfield Royal Infirmary  
Telephone: 01484 342434  
Booking Office: 01484 728941

[www.cht.nhs.uk](http://www.cht.nhs.uk)

**If you would like this information in another format or language contact the above.**

Potřebujete-li tyto informace v jiném formátu nebo jazyce, obraťte se prosím na výše uvedené oddělení

Jeżeli są Państwo zainteresowani otrzymaniem tych informacji w innym formacie lub wersji językowej, prosimy skontaktować się z nami, korzystając z ww. danych kontaktowych

ਬ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਪ੍ਰਾਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ,  
ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਉਪਰੋਕਤ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور فارمیٹ یا زبان میں درکار ہوں، تو  
براہ کرم مہربانی مندرجہ بالا شعبے میں ہم سے رابطہ کریں۔

"إذا احتجت الحصول على هذه المعلومة بشكل مغاير أو مترجمة إلى لغة مختلفة فيرجى منك الاتصال بالقسم  
المذكور أعلاه"