

HYDRO

by Scott Tribby 06_01_06

Throughout our lives we sustain a number of injuries, aches and pains. By the time we've reached adulthood our bodies have been through literally thousands of traumatic events, ranging from mild to severe in some cases. Although treatment of injuries and pains varies depending upon the nature and stage, there almost always one constant: hydrotherapy. By definition, hydrotherapy is the use of water in all three of its forms (liquid, solid and vapor) in the treatment of trauma. While different temperatures can be utilized, the number one rule is when in doubt, always use cold treatments. The major benefits of cold therapy are reduced inflammation, decreased pain, decreased circulation and muscle guarding, and increased ROM. Cold therapy comes in four major forms:

Ice packs: these are the most popular and great for reducing inflammation in joints and soft tissue injuries

Ice massage: this method has the added benefit of stimulation as well as reducing inflammation. Simply freeze a styrofoam cup full of water, tear off the bottom to expose ice, and massage the injured area in a circular motion.

Cold immersion baths: these can be utilized over the entire body or a localized area only.

Heating compress: this is a cold compress wrapped in a dry layer of wool or similar heavy material and applied to the area for several hours. This allows the body to slowly warm the area, bringing in new nutrient-rich blood and speeding healing.

While cold therapy is one of the best and most under-used methods of treatment, heat therapy is one of the most used and abused methods. The major benefits of heat therapy are decreased stiffness, decreased pain, increased ROM, increased tissue healing and increased immune response. Heat therapy comes in four major forms:

Heat packs: these come in a variety of forms, some chemically activated and others having to be heated in a microwave or boiled in water.

Heating pads/blankets: ranging from smaller, localizing pads to entire bed-sized blankets.

Hot immersion baths: like the cold kind, these can be utilized over the entire body or a localized area only.

Whirlpools: limited in their application, they can be used to effectively treat some forms of injury.

During the later stages of healing, both forms of treatment can be used with one another. This is known as contrast treatment. This form of treatment usually involves shorter applications used back-to-back. Heat is applied for 3 minutes, then cold for 30 seconds. This process is repeated for 4 to 8 repetitions, constituting one

treatment.

Now that you know what type of treatments to use, how do you know when to apply them? There are three basic phases of injury: acute, subacute and chronic. Here's how and when you should use hydrotherapy during these phases:

Acute: the first 1-7 days of post-injury. During this phase only cold therapy should be used for 10 to 20 minutes at a time. Repeat 3 to 4 times daily.

Subacute: 7-21 days post-injury. Cold therapy is still the major form of treatment during this phase, but mild heat could be used as well (especially if excessive stiffness has developed).

Chronic: 21+ days post-injury. All three forms of treatment can and should be used during this phase.

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Scott is both a Sports Performance Coach and Licensed Massage Therapist that has worked with clients from every background. For the past 6 years he's helped elite athletes in a myriad of different sports (lacrosse, hockey, wrestling, tennis, soccer) achieve a high level of success, as well as those clients who are seeking to better their fitness and lead more productive, fulfilling lives.

Having also worked as a therapist in clinical settings, he also has experience dealing with clients who are injured and undergoing rehabilitation. By pairing these two skill sets with one another, Scott's overall philosophy is one that focuses on long-term health, maximum functionality and injury prevention. He is a firm believer that hard work pays big dividends, and is with his clients every step of the way to ensure that they achieve what they've set out to.

Certifications: Renegade Training Certified Trainer, NCBTMB Nationally Certified Massage Therapist.

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