Athletic Injuries

Proper early treatment and rehabilitation leads to a quicker recovery for most athletic injuries. You may be able to return to your sport fully recovered in less time if you follow these general rules:

- **Rest -** Rest the injury until movement is no longer painful. Using an injured joint or muscle will prolong the problem.
- **Elevate -** Keep the injured area elevated until most of the swelling and pain are gone. If possible, keep the injured area above the level of your heart.
- **Ice -** Use ice packs directly on the injury for three to four days.
- **Compression -** Use an elastic bandage applied to your injury as directed. This will reduce swelling, although elastic wraps do not protect injured joints. More rigid splints and taping are better for this purpose.
- **Rehabilitation -** This should begin as soon as the swelling and pain of your injury subside, and as directed by your caregiver. It includes exercises to improve joint motion and muscular strength. Occasionally special braces, splints, or orthotics are used to protect against further injury when you return to your sport.

Keeping a positive attitude will help you heal your injury more rapidly and completely. You may return to physical exercise that does not cause pain or increase the risk of re-injury or as directed. This will help maintain fitness. It will also improve your mental attitude. **Do not overuse your injured extremity. This will lead to discomfort and may delay full recovery.**

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