

SUND^{CLINICS}AL



Top tips to beat running injuries

Simple steps to treat injuries yourself

Top tips to beat running injuries

How to manage an acute injury

As a physiotherapist, this is a question I get asked a lot and having just completed the Brighton Half Marathon you may be asking yourself the same question. So to help you with your post-run recovery here are a few useful tips to ease you back to fitness and potentially your next race.

Physiotherapists love an acronym and what used to be known as RICE or PRICE is now often referred to in the industry as POLICE. With each letter relating to a useful management strategy, this acronym can be a helpful tool in guiding anyone suffering from an acute injury.

Protection

Depending on the severity of your injury you may want to use a brace, taping or in more extreme circumstances casts and crutches, this will help to prevent excessive movement and protect the site of injury.

Optimal Loading

The critical part to remember here is OPTIMAL; the right amount of loading will help stimulate the healing process of a muscle, tendon, ligament and bone. This could be any activity such as standing, walking or swimming, however in more severe injuries such as fractures or full tendon ruptures the OPTIMAL load might be no loading and may require casting, crutches or surgical intervention.

Ice

Applying ice during the initial stages of an acute injury can be beneficial for reducing both pain and swelling. Although medical professionals have been recommending ice for several years the evidence is far from conclusive. I usually advise my patients to wrap an ice pack in a flannel or thin towel and apply directly on the site of pain for 15 minutes 3 to 4 times daily within the first 72 hours of injury.

Compression

Similar to ice compression can be used for managing swelling, applying a simple Tubigrip or neoprene strap can help to compress the injury site. The applied compression should be tight but comfortable with good circulation above and below the strapping; I often ask patients to remove the compression for short periods throughout the day and take the strapping off at night to allow the skin time to breathe.

Elevation

Can also be very useful in reducing swelling. For example, if you've acutely sprained your ankle lying on your back with your leg raised and supported can reduce the amount of blood rushing to the affected area. With this specific injury, you may wish to do a few ankle pumps to improve the blood flow and help with the healing process.

At this point, it is probably worth mentioning that I recommend anyone to seek medical advice if you are unsure about an injury. Although the POLICE protocol is a useful tool for managing an acute injury it is not a one size fits all strategy!! If you are having difficulty weight-bearing or have symptoms such as bony tenderness, considerable swelling, loss of range of movement or the feeling of instability in a joint, then I recommend seeing a medical professional ASAP.

Sundial Clinics offers 50% off a first appointment to Brighton Half Marathon runners. This is a physiotherapy assessment for anyone who would like advice about an injury. This session is a great way to get some useful tips on how best to manage your injury and to see if physiotherapy is right for you. Why not call the clinic today to arrange a free informal consultation and stop that niggle turning into a pain!

Book a 50% off physio session via the website www.sundialclinics.co.uk

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