

Heat vs. Cold When and How to Use

Cryotherapy “Cold”

Effects:

Reduces blood flow, inflammation, and swelling, numbing effect

Recommended Time:

10-15 minutes
Use of cryotherapy for extended periods of time may stimulate negative physiological responses.

Typically best used for acute, swollen injuries.

Avoid Cold Application:

- In cases of peripheral vascular disease
- Over open wounds
- With decreased sensation
- With poor cold tolerance

Remember “RICE”

Rest
Ice
Compress
Elevate

Thermotherapy “Heat”

Effects:

Increase blood flow and swelling, relaxes muscle, soothes pain.

Recommended Time:

15-20 minutes for muscle tension relief.
30 minutes – 1 hour of certain modalities may be beneficial and provide soothing physiological responses.

Typically best used for chronic, stubborn pain.

Avoid Heat Application for:

- Acute injury
- Known bleeding disorders
- Tissues with lack of sensitivity

Be sure to use layers to protect skin from heat damage.