

SHIRLEY RD CHIROPRACTIC

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Acute Pain Management

Some helpful advice at this stage of your care include:

- As soon as possible, apply ice (10 minutes on, 20 minutes off). This is suggested for the first 24-36 hours following injury or pain. Ice only in the first 24-36 hours, repeated as often as possible (frozen vegetables or ice in a tea towel work well).
- Alternate ice and heat (10 minutes ice, 20 minutes heat). This can be done over the next 2-3 day period. It is better to start on ice and finish on ice.
- Beyond 3 days, continue alternating ice and heat. At this stage it is better to start on heat and finish on heat.

Stages of Tissue Repair

Stage 1 – Active Congestion: Begins 12-72 hours after injury

- a) Inflammation is due to release of chemicals from the bloodstream.
 - b) Swelling restricts motion and increases pain.
 - c) Pain causes a reflex muscle spasm.
- Ice at this stage acts as a pain killer and muscle relaxant, by restricting excess blood flow and decreasing the metabolic rate of cells.



Stage 2 – Passive Congestion: Begins on day 2 to 4

- a) Normal blood flow is restored, but inflammation remains.
 - b) Mobility increases the removal of swelling, improves nutrition and increases oxygen to the area. Immobility prolongs the swelling and increases risk of excess scar tissue and adhesions.
 - c) Adjustments restore motion, stimulating the circulation of joint fluid.
 - d) Adjustments stimulate nutrient flow within the discs of the spine.
- Alternating ice and heat aids in reducing excessive inflammation. Ice aids in reducing inflammatory products to the area, while heat flushes away chemicals that are stagnating in the area.



Stage 3 – Repair: Day 5 to 3-6 weeks

- a) Scar tissue is deposited.
 - b) Immobility at this stage leads to increased scar tissue that is haphazard and random, chronic stiffness and an increased likelihood of degeneration.
 - c) Motion aids in improving the alignment of connective tissue to help support the joint.
- Gentle range of movement exercises are suggested for the problematic area. Move the joint within its pain free zone, to avoid excess scar tissue.
 - Adjustments are aimed at increasing motion, while encouraging the correct deposition and alignment of scar tissue.



Stage 4 – Remodelling: Begins at 3-6 weeks and usually takes 3-14 weeks but may last up to 1 year with severe injury

- a) The body attempts to re-align scar tissue along directions of stress.
 - b) The body attempts to restore regular patterns in connective tissue which permit it to elongate and recover to its original length.
- A more vigorous exercise regime may be more appropriate at this stage to help in the recovery process.
 - Adjustments will continue to help in alignment of scar tissue and will prevent future stiffness and poor mobility in the injured area.

Other Interesting Information

- In the recovery process there is a period of vulnerability. This is the period where pain has decreased but tissues are not completely healed. It typically occurs around the 2 week to 6 week mark. Be aware and take extra care during this time.
 - Following the acute stage of pain and discomfort, we will be helping you implement a series of gentle exercises for stretching and increasing strength, as well as advising you about how to maintain healthy joints, muscles and tendons.
 - If at any stage you have any questions or concerns, please discuss this with one of us at Shirley Rd Chiropractic.
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- For further information regarding acute pain management, and references for the above material, please visit our website.