

## The Recovery Process

Recovery from an injury is a natural process but slows with age. It is critical to work along with the healing process rather than fight it.

After a strain or sprain injury, it is important to follow the guidelines that encourage the healing process. For a sprained ankle, the common treatment is to first ice the injured area for 24 to 48 hours, then switch to mild heat. Placing cold on the ankle slows down the flow of fluids to the areas and minimizes swelling. Swelling puts pressure on the tissues and can delay healing. Twenty-four to forty-eight hours after the acute injury, mild heat can be used to increase the flow of nutrition to the injured area.

*If the injury occurs at work, be sure to follow the reporting procedures dictated by your company's policy—report the injury to your supervisor or management immediately.*

If an injury requires a visit to a doctor or therapist, it is important that people get answers to the questions that help them participate in the healing process. The majority of the healing is going to happen while they are on their own. This means that activity choices made will either speed up or slow down the healing process.

### Good questions to ask a health care provider include:

1. What is my treatment plan and why?
2. What activities may aggravate this injury? If I need to do a specific activity, what is the best method that both helps in the healing process and will not aggravate it?
3. What exercises would help the healing process and reduce the risk of re-injury?

**Remember: The body wants to heal.  
Work with it—not against it!**



# THE RECOVERY PROCESS

## Talking Notes

### POINTS TO REVIEW

**1. Recovery from an injury is natural. It is important to work with the process and not against it.**

When an injury occurs, it is important to allow the healing process to take place. The amount of time needed depends on the type of injury. While limiting movement is important in the earliest stages of recovery, movement of the injured part eventually becomes necessary. Movement helps nutrition move to the recovering area and prevents the area from losing mobility.

**2. Successful recovery depends as much on your activity and inactivity level as it does on the person who is treating you.**

When athletes recover from an injury, they are generally the hardest working player on the team. While they begin the healing process on ice and in the whirlpool, they are eventually in the weight room and on the running track getting back in shape. Letting yourself become deconditioned following an injury can slow down the pace of recovery and increase your risk of experiencing the problem again.

**3. You have every right to know what is happening to you during the treatment process.**

If everyone was asked to hold their arms out to the side for a long period of time, many would be unable to do it for more than a minute or two. Oxygen is having a difficult time getting to the working muscles and this leads to muscle fatigue. Many jobs require numerous repetitions of a task. The better the endurance in the muscles, the easier it is for the individual to use their muscles for a longer period of time.

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

**1. What is the standard first aid procedure for a strain or a sprain?**

**2. What are methods for speeding up the recovery process? Slowing it down?**

**3. What is the patient's role in the recovery process?**

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