**MANAGING ACUTE INJURIES**

Most injuries in sports are to the soft tissues (muscles, tendons, ligaments or joints).

There are 2 types: **Strains:** Occur to muscles and tendons (hamstring)

 **Sprains:** Stretch or tear of a ligament (ankle ligaments)

These are further classified into 3 grades:

* **Grade 1**: microscopic tear
	+ Normal recovery: 2-3 weeks
* **Grade 2**: partial disruption to the fibers
	+ Normal recovery: 3-6 weeks
* **Grade 3**: complete rupture
	+ Normal recovery: 3 months

To maximise recovery and return to netball a diagnosis of the grade of injury from your physio allows for an individualised plan of management and rehabilitation. All muscle strains need recovery time to allow healing and if you continue to play the condition my worsen increasing the risk of further damage or even a complete rupture. It is a rule in any level of sport to pass a ‘fitness to play test’ usually undertaken by the physio that tests all the requirements of netball, thereby reducing the risk of re-injury.

Soft tissue injuries are managed using **RICE** and **NO HEAT** principlesinitially

**RICE:** first 24-78hours

Aim: minimize bleeding, swelling and further tissue damage.

Quick management: minimizes tissue scarring, allows full recovery and return to daily and sporting activities

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| R | Rest | Sit or lie down with the injured part supported carefully. Avoid excessive movement of the injured area. |
| I | Ice | Wrap ice or a cold pack in a damp cloth (to avoid ice burn) and place it over the injured area for up to 20 minutes. Reapply every 2 hours or as needed |
| C | Compression | Wrap a compression bandage around the injured area to support it, reduce movement and swelling. Ensure bandage isn’t too tight by checking circulation. |
| E | Elevation | Raise the injured area above the level of your heart to reduce swelling, bleeding and blood flow to the area and relieve pain. |

NO HARM

Avoid the following for the first 48-72 hours after a soft tissue injury. NO……

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| H | Heat | Any heat will increase the blood flow and therefore the bleeding. Avoid: hot showers, baths, saunas, heat rubs and hot water bottles. |
| A | Alcohol | May increase swelling |
| R | Running | Exercising to quickly may aggravate and worsen the injury. Only ‘corkys’ (contusions) should be gently stretched/ exercised a few hours after the injury |
| M | Massage | Any massage will increase the swelling and bleeding |

## Following these principles you can reduce the **TISSUE HEALING PROCESS…**

which begins with an inflammatory response lasting 3-5 days. During the inflammatory reaction the body produces chemicals and cells which remove dead muscle fibres and start the repair process. The repair process consists of three stages:

1. REGENERATION OF MUSCLE FIBRES
New muscle fibres grow from special cells within the muscle.
2. FORMATION OF SCAR TISSUE
There is bleeding in the gap between the torn muscle ends, which forms a matrix, or scaffold, to anchor the two ends together. This matrix eventually forms a scar within the muscle that makes the muscle more resistant to further stretch damage.
3. MATURATION OF THE SCAR TISSUE
The collagen fibres which make up the scar tissue become aligned along lines of external stress and are able to withstand more force.

Following any injury please make an appointment to see me so that we can rehabilitate you as efficiently and effectively as we can so we can get you back onto the court quickly. If you have any questions about injury management please feel free to contact me on (08) 8263 8844. If I am consulting, leave a message and I am more than happy to call you back.

Lisa Crowder

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