

# Heat vs. Ice

**HEAT IS FOR RELAXING MUSCLES**  
**ICE IS FOR DECREASING INFLAMMATION**

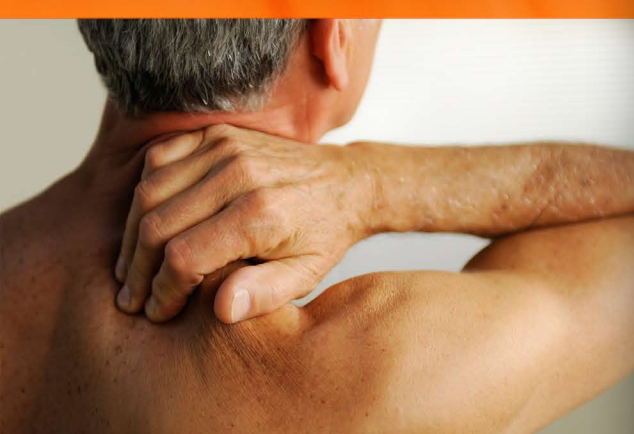
## HEAT: WHAT IT DOES

Promotes muscle relaxation.  
Can increase range of motion.  
Opens blood vessels (which increases blood flow, relaxing muscles and relieving pain).

## HEAT: WHEN TO USE IT

To loosen up tight joints and muscles.  
Pain relief for tension headaches and other chronic conditions.  
Always wait **48-72 hours** before considering heat therapy.

**When in doubt - use ice.**



## ICE: WHAT IT DOES

Calms down damaged tissue and slows blood flow to the painful area.  
This helps to reduce swelling, inflammation and pain.

## ICE: WHEN TO USE IT

Right after a workout.  
Good for migraines, bumps, sprains, and strains.  
Also helpful in treating over-use injuries.

**When in doubt - use ice.**



## HELPFUL HEAT TIPS:

- Treat no longer than 20 minutes at a time.
- Do not lie on a hot pack. Falling asleep could lead to potential burns.
- Do not use heat if you have no feeling in that part of the body.
- **NEVER** use heat if there is swelling or bruising.
- Do not apply heat directly to the skin.
- Do not use heat if you have poor circulation.
- Wait an hour in between heat.

## HELPFUL ICE TIPS:

- Treat no longer than 20 minutes at a time.
  - Check skin every five minutes to ensure there is no damage (freezer burn).
- Do not apply ice directly to skin, use a towel.
- Wait an hour in between treatments.

For more information on joint pain, visit [premierhealth.com/ortho](https://www.premierhealth.com/ortho).

SOURCES: Arthritis Foundation