



## A Guide to Acute Injury Care

### Who gets injured?

The answer is “nearly everyone”. Performers can be injured during their everyday life, but they can also be injured while practising or performing. Performance-specific injury care can minimise the impact on your performance and maximise your chances of speedy and complete recovery.

### It hurts – what now?

Despite your best efforts, an injury has occurred! **Now**, you can do a lot to assist your body’s recovery. Pain, swelling and heat are important parts of your body’s protective and healing responses but you can keep them under control, prevent further harm and speed recovery by applying the **PRICE** and **HARM** principles.

### USE PRICE during the first 48 hours

**Protect** – protect and support the injured area

**Relative rest** – avoid painful movement until you have advice from a health professional (HP)

**Ice** – apply ice or icepack in a moist towel for 10-20 minutes every 2 hours to relieve pain/inflammation

**Compression** – an elastic bandage can support the injured part and help manage swelling,

**Elevation** – elevating the injured part above the heart may help drainage and reduce swelling.

### AVOID HARM during the first 48 hours

**Heat** – may increase tissue bleeding. Avoid heating liniments/hot packs/hot baths

**Alcohol** – dilates blood vessels, may increase bleeding

**Rehearsing/practising/performing** – avoid discomfort until you have advice from a HP

**Massage** – can increase inflammation and worsen tissue bleeding.

**Please note: Diagnosis and guidance from a health professional (HP) is invaluable in ensuring optimal recovery. For persisting or severe pain, diagnosis should be obtained as soon as possible.**

### What about after 48 hours?

**If things are improving**, your HP may encourage you to gently move the injured area, and will guide you on how much discomfort is safe.

Maintaining strength and cardiovascular fitness can facilitate recovery.

**As pain and swelling settle**, start some short, pain-free practice, progressing duration and difficulty as your HP advises. Acute injury can also produce shock and stress. Try some relaxation and healing imagery to reduce the negative effects of stress and focus on healing and return to performance. There are HPs who can help you cope with physical, emotional, psychological and other effects of injury. Ask your GP for advice.

**If things are not improving**, seek advice from a HP as soon as you can, and avoid practicing or performing until you know more about your condition.

### What next?

Most well-managed injuries settle quickly and allow a safe return to performance. However, some are slower to heal and it may take you longer than expected to return to full training and performance. If are concerned, or if you feel emotional, psychological, or other effects of injury, always seek help from a HP who has the expertise to help with your specific needs.

### Where can I find more information?

ASPAH Guides also give useful information. Read:

- *An ASPAH Guide to Australia's Health System*
- *An ASPAH Guide to Overuse and Chronic Injury Care*
- *An ASPAH Guide to Understanding Pain*
- *An ASPAH Guide to Fitness*

**NB: This poster is for educational purposes only and does not replace the advice of a health professional.**