

SELF- CARE PROGRAM FOR EARLY SYMPTOM MANAGEMENT

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The following tips may assist you in managing your pain and discomfort as it occurs at work and home. The tips are geared toward splint usage, ice technique and over the counter medication use. If you are currently receiving medical care, we encourage you to review these guidelines with your healthcare provider. If you are doing self-care, select the tips that will best help you and evaluate each for its benefit to you after trying the suggestion. If your pain worsens, seek medical advice.

Wrist/Hand Splint Management:

1. Try and minimize the use of your splint while typing and performing work with your hand, especially if it is a full profile splint that limits your finger and hand motion. You may actually increase the amount of work your muscles are doing in the splint and cause more pain as you are trying to perform an activity in a confined or restricted position.
2. Wear the splint on an on/off cycle. Put it on while on the phone or during meetings, while in the car or when you are using your hand the least amount. Wear it for 15 minutes to 2 hours, then take it off. Do this 8-10 times/day.
3. Recognize early signs of muscle fatigue such as cramping, tightness, pressure and a tired feeling. Burning, spasms and increased pain indicates fatigue has occurred and you should have stopped sooner. This is the time to rest (apply your splint), stretch or change your activity. Icing or in some cases, heating the involved area may be appropriate as well.
4. Make sure your splint is comfortable and not too tight. It should not dig or cause swelling. Make sure it provides support in the involved areas.
5. A rest break can be a time for rest, change in activity, icing/heating or stretches and exercise.
6. If you have numbness or tingling especially at night, continue to wear your splint while sleeping.
7. If you have any additional questions or concerns, contact your doctor or healthcare provider immediately.
8. Wear your splint during bedtime.

Ice Technique:

Use ice to reduce inflammation, pain and spasms to the involved area. The following tips will help you to achieve maximum benefits with ice.

Types of Ice Packs:

1. Purchase a (blue) gel pack at the local drug store that is usually used with picnic foods. Keep this in your freezer ready for use.
2. Fill a zip lock bag with 1/3 rubbing alcohol and 2/3 water. It will freeze as a slush and be malleable to your body part.
3. A bag of frozen vegetables can work well as an ice pack.
4. Freeze water in a cup and put a popsicle stick in it for direct ice technique.

Application:

Ice packs should be applied to the involved area for at least 15 minutes/session. Don't put the pack directly to your skin, cover the pack with a thin towel (dish, wash cloth or small terri-cloth) to protect the skin. If the area is boney, you may want to cool it down slowly to improve the tolerance. Apply the ice in 15 second increments, on/off until the skin surface cools enough to leave the ice on. You can apply the ice on/off throughout the day in 20-30 minute increments. Ice packs

are excellent for use on swollen, tight, spasmed muscles, trigger points or areas that are burning, aching or very sore.

To perform direct ice technique, use the freezer cup of ice or ice cube and massage the ice over the involved area in circular or lateral strokes quickly for 5-7 minutes. Direct ice is excellent for acute and chronic tendonitis and directly applied to isolated trigger points to the neck and back areas.

Your Expectations:

Although ice can be uncomfortable to apply because it is cold, it is one of the most effective methods to relieve acute and chronic pain (and swelling). It does not matter if the injury occurred today or 5 years ago, you can use it at any time. You will feel discomfort and possibly some pain the first 2-5 minutes of icing until the area is numb. After that, you should not feel discomfort. Check your skin after 5 minutes to be sure that it is bright pink. It should not turn white or be mottled. If it is, you have likely over cooled the skin. Some people are allergic to ice technique and develop a rash as a result of the ice. If this develops, discontinue use immediately.

You may want to heat the area. Heating may actually irritate the area and make it worse as it is already inflamed. A hot bath or soak is acceptable, followed by icing the area.

Medications:

Your doctor may have prescribed pain medication and anti-inflammatory meds for your condition. We encourage you to take them as prescribed. If you are managing your pain on your own, there are numerous over-the-counter medications that can be purchased today to relieve pain and inflammation. Some of these are **Nuprin**, **Aleve**, **Ibuprofen**, **Motrin IB**, etc. Be wary that these products can sometimes cause upset stomach, stomach bleeding and indigestion or constipation. If you have other medical problems, discuss these medications with your doctor before taking them.

Self-Care Routine:

If you have acute or chronic pain, it is critical that you be an active participant in your rehabilitation. There is no time to delay in applying these tips to manage your pain. If you wait, your pain will likely worsen. The sooner you intervene in your own care, the sooner you will be pain minimal or pain free. It is the person that practices good self-care and self-responsibility that beats chronic pain and resumes an active and healthy lifestyle with or without discomfort.

We suggest you begin with icing the area and an active stretching program combined with task interruption/rotation at work. Also, if you can obtain an ergonomic analysis of your work area, this may have significant benefit as well. If pain continues, progress by adding the medication and splinting. If you are not relieved with this routine within 2 weeks or a reasonable time frame, or your symptoms worsen, please seek medical advice. Do not delay any longer. When you see the physician, discuss your self-care routine with them.

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“STRETCH- TIME”

On-Site Stretching
And
Self-Care Program



For The Prevention and
Management
of Work Related
Injuries and Illnesses

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I. Stretching: What is it?

1. Stretching lengthens muscles and soft tissue.
2. Increases flexibility and circulation throughout the body.
3. Reduces the likelihood of muscle strains and sprains.
4. Helps reduce muscle spasming
5. Keeps your muscles warmed up and ready to work.
6. Helps to keep you more alert and productive throughout the day.

II. Self stretching before work is recommended to warm up the body making you less prone to injury.

1. Take at least 1-2 minutes to warm-up and then 5-10 minutes to perform your stretching routine before work. Your employer may provide a specific time period for you and your co-workers to stretch.
2. Take advantage of your lunch and break time to re-stretch.
3. Stretching can be performed at home after work to further reduce stress and fatigue.

III. Proper Stretching Technique:

1. As you begin your stretching program; be aware not to over exert yourself. Work slowly and control your stretch.
2. Perform each stretch 3-5 times each holding the desired position 5-15 seconds.
3. Remember not to bounce while holding the position.
4. Proper form is critical. Make sure you are following the instructions in the program.
5. Stretching should not be painful. A painful stretch makes the muscle work against you.
6. While doing your stretches, you might feel a pulling or tight sensation. Hold that position and slowly stretch further.
7. Remember to breathe deeply and relax while stretching. Try not to rush through your stretches.

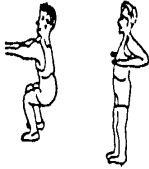
Remember: If you develop pain or discomfort beyond the level experienced with stretching or have a current or previous injury, please consult the company nurse or supervisor prior to stretching.



Cardiovascular

March; raise one arm with the Opposite leg

1 minute



Cardiovascular

Squat down with arms to the front and the back straight; Straighten up and pull shoulders and elbows back.

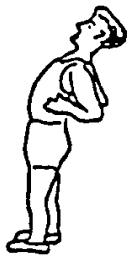
10 times.



Spine and Trunk

Keep both arms to your side; Bend side-to-side

Repeat 3-5 times each side.



Lower Back

Put both hands in the small of your back and bend backwards as far as comfortable, hold briefly and return to upright.

Repeat 3-5 times.



Full Spine and Body

Keeping fingers laced, Stretch palms overhead as high as possible, reach upwards,

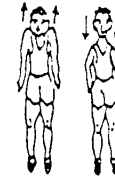
Repeat 3-5 times.



Neck and Shoulders

Slowly stretch the neck sideways using the arm over the head, keep shoulders low, hold for five seconds.

Repeat 3-5 times each side.



Neck and Mid-back

Shrug both shoulders up-hold five seconds; push both shoulders down, hold five seconds. Roll shoulders in a full circle.

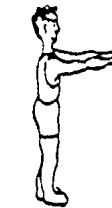
Repeat 10 times.



Rotator Cuff

Pull the elbow across the body using other hand, hold for 5 seconds.

Repeat 3-5 times each side.



Mid-back

With Fingers laced, stretch palms to front, hold five seconds.

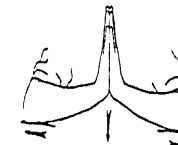
Repeat 3-5 times.



Chest and Mid-back

Both hands together behind the back, stretch backwards, hold for five seconds.

Repeat 3-5 times.



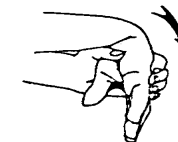
Forearm Flexors

Palms of hands together, elbows out to sides, press hands down, hold for five seconds. Repeat 3-5 times.



Forearm Flexors

Straighten arm out in front, pull fingers and hand back, hold five seconds. Repeat 3-5 times each side.



Forearm Extensors

Keep arm out in front, bend hand down till you feel the stretch in your forearm, hold five seconds. Repeat 3-5 times each side.