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healing process:

Inflammatory / Proliferation / Maturation injury & self-care actions

by Mark McFadden, Physiotherapist

One of the most consistently asked questions by most individuals seeking advice from physiotherapists is "When will this pain go away?" The answer to this question can be derived from the **type of injury** sustained, the **stage of healing** of the injury and the overall health of the injured person.

Subsequent to any injury or when suffering from pain, knowing and applying proper and often simple **self-care** can have a significant impact on the extent and speed of successful recovery. Suitable choices and usage of self-care treatment are dependent on understanding both the type of injury and the stage of healing the injury has reached. Employing common & familiar measures for injury care will most likely help rather than hinder healing but using self-care treatment tailored specifically to your injury and stage of healing will provide the best tools to help ensure success.

There are two main methods by which injuries are sustained. The most familiar is an abrupt **traumatic** event when the force of the trauma is sufficient to cause instantaneous damage to the body. Of equal importance, the second method of injury, is due to a lower intensity trauma **repetitive** in nature whose damaging effects present only after sufficient accumulation.

The body's natural response to injury is healing and is initiated immediately following any injury. Beginning with the **inflammatory phase**, successful healing progresses through the Proliferation phase to completion in the Maturation phase.

Typically progressing through the first 2-10 days the inflammatory phase is characterized by pain, swelling and bruising, along with altered joint motion, muscle actions and sensations. Very often however individuals become stuck in this phase for longer periods. The goal of any intervention during the inflammatory phase is avoidance of additional injury, control of swelling, reduction of pain, muscle reactivation and progressive movement recovery. R.I.C.E refers to simple self-care measures of rest, ice, compression and elevation used to address these goals.

R.I.C.E.

Rest / Restricting the type and amount of movement to those that are pain free for both single action motions as well as repetitive motions is the safest choice for care. Motions inducing pain are an indication of additional stress to the already damaged tissues.

Ice / Cooling the area of injury assists in pain reduction, minimizing the extent of to minimize swelling. Far too often ice is improperly applied. In the inflammatory phase, applying ice once every 3-4 hours for approximately 15 to 20 minutes each time is a good goal to set. Be attentive to your body's response to cold and ensure there are no adverse affects experienced.

Compression / Exterior compression correctly applied with tensor wraps or bandages during waking hours will help to provide mild restriction of motion, offer mild support and control of swelling. Excessive compression should always be avoided.



Elevation / Elevating the injured area for a period of 10 minutes twice per day will support resting the injured tissues and controlling the swelling. The body's tendency is toward excessive swelling, which can impede the speed of recovery process.

Although these are simple and easy methods to employ, the most optimal method, frequency and duration of application are not always evident. In fact, they may not be suitable for all individuals and the parameters will vary depending on the type and location of injury and as you progress in your healing. Understanding and receiving advice on the best method of application can have profound impacts on your recovery.

This article is the first in a series of three articles on the "Healing process". Please watch for the information on the Proliferation & Maturation phase of healing that will be presented in upcoming newsletters. For more information or to book an appointment with Mark contact the Adelaide Health Clinic.



chronic tension headaches

by Dr. David Lee, Chiropractor, ART Provider

Do you suffer from chronic or frequent headaches? If you do there is a 75% - 90% chance that they are tension headaches. They are the most common type of primary headache which is seen quite often in people who have poor posture, high stress jobs, or are in positions that place a lot of stress on your shoulders, neck, and upper back (ie. sitting at a desk all day).

The most common locations of pain in a tension headache are in the neck, base of the skull, and on the sides or front of your forehead. The pain is usually described as a dull, aching or squeezing feeling. Many people also describe this sensation as if their head were in a vice that slowly squeezes with more intensity throughout the day.

If you have suffered for a long time from these symptoms, don't lose heart, there is hope for you. There are many methods to treat tension headaches, such as medications (ie. pain killers, muscle relaxers). However, unfortunately these treatments usually treat the symptoms, and not the cause of the problem.

The cause of tension headaches are muscular in nature. If you place a continual strain on your neck, shoulder, and upper back muscles for whatever reason, this may lead to the formation of knots in your muscles, which can then lead to muscle spasms. Muscle spasms tighten up, which will then restrict blood flow and irritate nerve endings, resulting in pain as described above.

Here at the Adelaide Health Clinic we see and treat people with tension headaches on a daily basis, and almost of all them receive permanent relief from their headaches without having to take any medications. The primary method of treatment I use to treat these headaches is Active Release Techniques (ART) which works by breaking up scar tissue in the muscles and alleviate muscle spasms.

For more information or to book an appointment with Dr. David Lee, contact the Adelaide Health Clinic.



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