

**Ohio Wesleyan University
Student Health Center**

SPRAINS and STRAINS

A *sprain* is an injury caused by the twisting or wrenching of a joint. A *strain* is an injury caused by overstretching tendons or overusing muscles. If you suffer from a strain or sprain injury, think **R-I-C-E (Rest, Ice, Compress, Elevate)**.

REST

Stop using the injured part. The use of slings and crutches may be helpful. You may borrow a pair of crutches from the Student Health Center (extension 3160).

ICE

Apply ice as soon as possible to ease pain and slow swelling. Apply ice packs or cold compresses every two hours for no more than 20 minutes for the first three days. Prevent freezing of skin by placing a cloth between the ice pack and injured area.

COMPRESS

Wrap with an Ace bandage to decrease swelling and pain. The bandage should be snug but not tight. There should be no color or sensation change in the area under or near to it. Remove the Ace bandage while sleeping.

ELEVATE

Elevate the injured limb above the level of the heart (pillows can be used).

Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medicines like ibuprofen (Advil) or naproxen (Aleve) may be helpful for pain and swelling. Acetaminophen (Tylenol) may also be used for pain relief.

Call the Student Health Center at extension 3160 if you have:

- Loss of movement or sensation.
- Severe pain or pain that lasts more than 24 hours.
- No reduction in swelling after 24 hours.

**** Further evaluation is necessary for safe athletic competition.***