

Treating Minor Injuries

All of us have gotten a physical injury of some type whether or not we play sports. Sprains and strains are common by overworking in the garden or raking a few too many leaves. Obviously, for serious injuries or ones which are not resolving easily, professional care is indicated.

There are several general treatment ideas. From Western medical wisdom comes the acronym RICE, which stands for Rest, Ice, Compression and Elevation.

Rest the affected area. Avoid re-injuring it.

Use ice (like a bag of frozen peas) on 10 minutes and off 10 minutes. Protect your skin with a cloth. Ice limits bleeding and bruising in the area, numbs the nerves and decreases swelling. Ice is best used for the first 24 hours and then heat may sometimes be best after that. Heat increases the blood supply to the area and promotes relaxation of muscles.

Compression means using an ace wrap to keep swelling at a minimum and protect the area. If you do this, begin wrapping the ace wrap from the part farthest from the torso and work toward the torso. For instance, begin at the wrist and end at the elbow. Make sure that there is good circulation past the compression wrap (like the hand using the example above) by checking pulses, color and temperature of the skin.

Elevation of an extremity helps handle swelling also.

The homeopathic remedy arnica, which is from an herb that has been diluted many times, is often very helpful to reduce bruising, pain and swelling. There are topical forms for use on intact skin and small pellets to take under your tongue which deal with symptoms all over your body. Homeopathic medicines work best when you do not use loud flavors in your mouth, such as mint or coffee. There are other homeopathic remedies for other specific symptoms, but arnica is generally helpful for trauma in general.

There are many acupuncture points that are helpful for various places of injury. In general Chinese medicine principles state that if there is pain, it is because the energy is not flowing freely. To promote free-flowing Qi, one may use acupressure (usually not on the specific area injured).

Acupressure may be administered with up and down pressure or small circles or direct pressing for a few minutes. Never cause pain. Overall, it is helpful to find a tender spot on an area which may help and hold pressure there for a few minutes to see if the affected area decreases in pain.

Some easy rules to follow are:

Left treats right and right treats left. So if your left ankle is injured, it may help to hold gentle pressure on your right ankle in the same place it hurts on the left.

Upper treats lower and lower treats upper. Your left ankle can also be treated using a tender point around your wrist or shoulder. The wrist treats ankles, elbow treats knees, and shoulder treats hips. It can also be upside down, like shoulder treats ankle, elbow treats knees and wrist treats hips.

Ears also offer points to treat. If you look at your ear, it looks like an upside down fetus. The head is the ear lobe and the spine curves around the back of the ear. If you massage the general area of the ear represented by that body part, you may also get some relief. More specific treatment consists of ear balls, seeds or needles.

After the first day or so, it is important to make sure to do range of motion for the joints in the area to make sure to keep mobile. Also remember to breathe deeply frequently because when we are less mobile our breathing tends to be shallower. Moving the whole body gently helps promote healing. Slow exercises with deep breathing like Qi Gong are often helpful.

Overall, listen to your body. Avoid overdoing it. Allow your body to heal and come back into balance. If it is a serious injury or a minor one that is not healing well or gets worse, see your medical provider for further assistance.

Visualization is also helpful. Close your eyes and relax. See the injured area. Use your creativity to help it heal. You can send healing light and love to the area or whatever you feel is appropriate. Notice how you feel after that.

Your body usually heals itself like a cut without you having to think about it. Cooperating with the healing process just makes it quicker and easier.

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