

Contrast Baths

Contrast baths are incredibly effective at helping to decrease swelling, while increasing the circulation to an injury.

Here's what to do: Use two medium pales of water. The 1st one should have cool tap water with 10-12 ice cubes in it. The 2nd one should have warm, not hot water (about 100°) in it. Put your foot in the cool water for one minute. Then immediately in the warm water for 4-5 minutes. Go back to the cool for 1 minute, then the warm again for 4-5 minutes. Repeat this cycle three times. Always start and stop in the cool water.

Cool	Warm	Cool	Warm	Cool
1 min	4 min	1 min	4 min	1 min

Don't be surprised if you have an unpleasant "tingling" sensation at first, this will go away.

Cold ACE Wrap

Instead of an ice pack, I recommend you keep two Ace wraps (4" brown elastic bandage) in a small dish of water in the refrigerator: **NOT** the freezer.

When you get home at the end of the day, or after exercising, take the Ace wrap out of the water; wring out the extra water; wrap the foot, ankle and lower leg snugly with this cool damp elastic wrap. Keep the wrap on for 20 -- 30 minutes while going about your business. Then unwrap and simply put the Ace bandage back in the dish of water in the refrigerator. In an acute injury, you may want to do this 2-3 times per day.

Stretching

Stretching is a nuisance, but it may be the single most important thing you do, while recovering. Luckily, stretching the Achilles tendon and the ankle is simple. Get a piece of wood (preferably a **2X4**) about 18" long. If you don't have a 2X4, a **phone book** (business pages) works as well. Place on the floor next to the bathroom or kitchen sink (someplace where you stand a lot). Every time you walk up to the sink to wash your hands, brush your teeth, etc., put your toes on the board and hang your heels off on the floor. You should feel a gentle stretch or tightness in the back of the calf. The beauty of this stretch is that you don't have to think about it, and stretching a muscle 10 times/day for 10 seconds each is much more effective than stretching once a day for 10 minutes!

Massage

Massage plays a significant role in mobilizing swelling and inflammation, and speeds up the healing process. Massage should be slightly uncomfortable to be effective (it should not bring tears to your eyes). Massaging the arch is simple. Find a place where you sit routinely and place a **tennis ball** on the floor. Alternatively, some people will take a **plastic bottle**, fill it with water & leave in the freezer, and use this to massage the arch. Simply rub the arch back and forth over the tennis ball (or frozen bottle) to massage the area. If there is a point of maximum tenderness, slowly work the ball around this point and focus on working the inflammation out from the area.

Soaks

Soaks are used for helping relief pain, fight infections and dry out (to speed healing) open wounds. Water temperature for soaking should be warm (~100° F.) **NOT HOT**. It is very

easy to burn the foot if the water is too hot. So always check the water temperature with your fingers before putting your foot in to soak. There are 2 choices to use in the water: 1st is **Epsom salts** - ~3 tablespoons of Epsom salts in enough water to go just below the ankle. Feel free to use table salt should Epsom salt not be available. 2nd – we often recommend the use of **Domeboro** powder or tablets (this is available over the counter; ask your pharmacist to help you find it). One packet in enough water to go just below the ankle is again the correct concentration. Feet should be soaked for **10 minutes**. Make sure to dry well (including **between the toes!**). Apply a very small amount of triple antibiotic cream (don't apply too much) if there is an open area or infection. The area should be covered with a band-aid during the day, and left open at night. ***Any increase in redness, pain or drainage warrants an immediate call to the office (even if it is after hours).***