

Top 10 Tips for Acute Pain

1. Don't panic. The severity of the pain is usually not an indication of how serious the problem is. Most patients in extremely acute pain have simple muscle spasms which, although incredibly painful, are usually resolved quickly.
2. Use ice - not heat. The worst part of an acute condition is that the inflammation makes the joint swell. Put a packet of frozen peas wrapped in a thin tea-towel on the painful area. Apply for 10-15 minutes every 1-2 hours - even if initially it feels sore, it will help. NB: Do not use if you suffer from diabetes or poor circulation.
3. Keep mobile - or as mobile as you can. If you can get out of bed, do so at regular intervals and gently move around the room.
4. Listen to your body - Pain is a warning sign. If what you are doing hurts - STOP. Don't try to push through the pain.
5. Rest as comfortably as you can - There isn't any right or wrong position, just do whatever feels best. Most patients find lying on their back with some support under their knees fairly comfortable.
6. Don't lie flat on the floor - unless it's your most comfortable position. Lying with your legs straight on a very hard surface generally increases the load at the bottom of your back.
7. Don't have a hot bath - the heat will aggravate the inflammation and the position can make you seize up.
8. Be careful with medication - Do take whatever you need to get relief (ask your doctor for advice/prescription), but remember that pain killers doesn't actually cure or heal your problem - they just mask the pain. Therefore you should still be very careful even when you start to feel better.
9. Accept help - from your family and friends. Don't be proud, you can always pay them back later!
10. See a primary healthcare practitioner such as Sports Therapist or Osteopath - if the pain persists past 48 hours you will need a thorough examination to diagnose and treat the exact nature of the problem.