Home Cold Therapy
"Cryotherapy"

The use of cold for the treatment of athletic injuries defines cryotherapy. The indications for cryotherapy include any of the typical soft tissue injuries, including sprains, strains, and contusions, both acute and chronic. By delaying and decreasing swelling, cold minimizes pain and muscle spasm associated with these injuries.

Cold should be applied immediately after an injury to limit swelling. This is important because the amount of swelling is directly proportional to the healing time.

Methods of Application

1. **Cubes or Crushed Ice**: place in a double layered plastic bag and apply to the injury over a wet towel. Wrap the ice pack to the body part with an elastic ace wrap to provide compression and apply 15-20 minutes every hour.
2. **Chemical Instant Cold Packs**: these are good for emergencies, when nothing else is available. They lose their cold- producing ability quickly and can only be used once.
3. **Reusable Synthetic Gel Packs**: these are to be used like ice bags. They remain flexible and conform well to the injured area. Never place them in direct contact with the skin.
4. **Ice Massage**: Styrofoam or paper cups are filled with water and then frozen. The top of the cup is peeled away, leaving a block of ice with an insulated holder. Rub the ice into the injured area until the skin is numb and has turned bright red. Repeat every hour, as needed.

When applying cold, remember to remove it after 10-20 minutes, after this time, the area should be numb. Leaving the ice on any longer may produce tissue damage, resulting in blister formation and/or frostbite. Be especially careful if using cold over a superficial nerve, for this may result in temporary or permanent nerve dysfunction. Do not use cryotherapy if you have a circulatory problem.

One last word- when treating new injuries, don't forget **R.I.C.E**.-
       Rest involved area
       Ice or other cryotherapy form
       Compression: ACE bandage
       Elevate the body part