***Basic Ankle Rehab #1***

The following is based on a common minor ankle sprain. If you are unsure about the severity f the injury seek professional medical advice. The following steps can be taken to help reduce the time needed to recover and the time needed to return to sport participation.

**RICE, RICE,** and more **RICE**. This stands for **Rest, Ice, Compression,** and **Elevation**

***Rest*** involves taking the athlete out of sport participation if pain is intense enough to limit adequate participation. This means id they can’t run because of pain, don’t let them run! Try to reduce as much movement as possible. Allow the injury to heal and do not push for more movement for at least 3 days. After 3 days another process starts, which will be discussed in Basic Ankle Rehab #2.

***Ice*** should be performed 15 min. every hour, if possible. This process should happen by placing crushed ice in a plastic bag and placed on the injured area. Putting a towel between the ice and the body part limits the effectiveness of the cold. Cold is a vasoconstrictor. This means the inured veins that are bleeding and causing the swelling will get reduced in size/diameter and as a result help to stop/prevent swelling. Ice also helps reduce pain/sensitivity for about 1 hour which is beneficial to the injury, especially in the early stages of healing. Avoid keeping the ice on for more than 15 min. at a time. This means don’t sleep with the ice. That is where frost nip or frost bit can occur. Also avoid the chemical packs if possible. These will get below 32 degrees and can cause frost nip or frost bite. If chemical packs are used, please put a thin towel between it and the skin.

***Compression*** can be a difficult thing to accomplish with an ankle injury. This is best accomplished with an ACE wrap or elastic wrap that is wrapped around the injured ankle at a medium tightness. Start at the toes and wrap in circles up the foot and ankle WITHOUT leaving holes. This will help push the swelling up the leg and back into the core of the body. If holes are left the swelling may balloon out the hole. A tight sock can work in place of an ace wrap. DO NOT CUT THE BLOOD FLOW OFF. Again, medium tightness, like a snug sock. Tighter is not better here. Leave the compression on for as much as possible for the first 3 days. Take of to shower and change to a fresh compression but the longer it is on the less it will swell.

***Elevation*** is accomplished my raising the foot about 12 to 18 inches about the heart. The easiest way is to lay flat on your back and use a pillow or other object to support the foot and ankle. You can elevate to high so please stay around the 12 to 18 inches for best results.

***Combine it all***:

For the best results combine RICE into a treatment that last about 15 -20 minutes every hour **IMMEDIATELY** after the injury occurs. After the 3rd day, if the injury is progressing well then you can reduce the number of treatments per day and start into the next step of rehab or Basic Ankle Rehab #2.

***Caution!*** DO NOT PUT HEAT ON AN INJURY THAT IS LESS THAN 3 DAYS OLD. Heat is a Vaso dilator and will increase swelling, pain, and the amount of time out of sports. If something seems to be not right, or you are worried about please seek medical attention. An orthopedic surgeon will provide the best information concerning an ankle injury.

Next steps:

After the pain is tolerable and swelling has started to reduce, basic movements need to begin. One of my favorites are the ABC’s. Instruct the injury person to use their big toe as a pencil and write the letters of the alphabet, AS LARGE AS POSSIBLE, several times in a row. Next have the athletic use a towel to perform a calf stretch by pulling the toes toward their chest for 3 sets of 20 seconds. If tolerable have the athlete begin to ride a stationary bike. Start with 5 minutes and work up from there in both intensity and time. Ice after each session