Sprains and strains





In a medical emergency, call Triple Zero (000) for an ambulance.

It can be difficult to tell whether the injury is a fracture, dislocation, sprain or strain. If in doubt, always treat as a fracture.

Signs & symptoms

Sprain

- intense pain
- restricted mobility
- rapid development of swelling and bruising.

Strain

- sharp, sudden pain in region of the injury
- · loss of power
- · muscle tenderness.

What to do

- 1. Follow DRSABCD.
- 2. Follow the RICE management plan:
 - REST the patient and the injured part.
 - Apply ICEPACK (cold compress) wrapped in a wet cloth to the injury for 15 minutes every 2 hours for 24 hours, then for 15 minutes every 4 hours for 24 hours.
 - Apply COMPRESSION elastic bandage firmly to extend well beyond the injury.
 - ELEVATE the injured part.
- 3. Seek medical attention if no improvement.

© St John Ambulance Australia. St John first aid protocols are for the Australian market only. All care has been taken in preparing the information but St John takes no responsibility for its use by other parties or individuals. This information is not a substitute for first aid training. St John recommends practical first aid training courses.