



Soft Tissue Injury

Soft tissue includes muscle, tendons, fascia and ligaments. Injury to these tissues can result from direct trauma, over-use, overstretching, or whiplash-type injuries such as from Motor Vehicle Collisions. The body's reaction to the injury may include swelling, inflammation, bruising, muscle spasm, and general muscle tightness and soreness. Typically, you will experience discomfort and pain due to the increase in tension in the muscles and the affected surrounding tissues. If the tissue injury creates pressure on the nerves in the area, you may also experience numbness and/or tingling symptoms.

Treatment will initially focus on decreasing the pain and inflammation in the area using modalities such as ultrasound, ice, and acupuncture. Increasing the range of motion (amount of movement) in the area will also be a priority. Strengthening exercises and stretches will be added as appropriate.

What can you do at home?

Rest: By decreasing your activity you allow your body a chance to heal itself. It is important to decrease the stress to the area by not doing aggravating activities but avoid tightening up the area by not moving it at all. Listen to your body - pain means you have done too much.

Ice or Heat: Ice decreases the metabolism of your cells so that they do not die despite a decrease in oxygen to the area. Ice should be kept on the area for approx 15 minutes, several times a day, the injured area should be elevated (above the level of your heart) at the same time. Use a wet towel between the ice and your skin. You can use frozen veggies, cold packs, or real ice. With some injuries heat can be used to decrease the tension - ask your therapist first. When in doubt, use ice.

