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INJURY MANAGEMENT

thinksafe

INJURY MANAGEMENT

Injury management involves identifying, treating and recovering from an injury. It's important that injured players don't suffer unnecessary additional pain and discomfort – and delay recovery from their injury. Remember, the sooner the injury is appropriately managed, the less time the player will be in pain or discomfort and the sooner they will be able to return to their activity.

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Assessing the injury

Injuries need to be evaluated as soon as possible using D.R.A.B.C. (Danger, Response, Airway, Breathing, Circulation) to determine their severity. If emergency treatment is not needed, T.O.T.A.P.S. is an effective tool for further assessment.

TALK

- Ask the player what happened.
- Where does it hurt?
- What kind of pain is it?

OBSERVE

- Look at the affected area for redness or swelling.
- Is the injured side different from the other side?

TOUCH

- Touch will indicate warmth for inflammation. Touch also assesses pain.

ACTIVE MOVEMENT

- Ask the injured player to move the injured part without any help.

PASSIVE MOVEMENT

- If the player can move the injured part, carefully try to move it through its full range of motion.

SKILL TEST

- Did the active and passive movement produce pain?
If no, can the player stand and demonstrate some of the skills from the game carefully?
- If an injury is identified, remove the player from the activity immediately.

The above guidelines do not apply for assessing head injuries/ concussion or suspected spinal injury. For suspected spinal injury, the player must be kept lying flat and immobile until professional help is available. For information on how to assess concussion, refer to the sports injury prevention part of the ACC website (www.acc.co.nz/sportsmart).

Immediate injury treatment

A soft tissue injury such as a sprain, strain or bruise identified using T.O.T.A.P.S should immediately be treated with the R.I.C.E.D. procedure:

REST

- Rest reduces further damage – stop activity as soon as the injury occurs.
- Avoid as much movement of the injured part as possible to limit further injury.
- Don't put any weight on the injured part.

ICE

- Ice cools the tissue and reduces pain, swelling and bleeding.
- Place ice wrapped in a damp towel onto the injured area – don't put ice directly onto bare skin.
- Hold the ice pack firmly in place with a bandage.
- Keep ice on the injury for 20 minutes every two hours for the first 48 hours.

COMPRESSION

- Firm bandaging helps to reduce bleeding and swelling.
- Ensure that bandaging is not so tight that it cuts off circulation or causes tingling or pain past the bandage.
- Bandage the injury between ice treatments.

ELEVATION

- Elevation helps to stop bleeding and reduce swelling.
- Raise the injured area on a pillow for comfort and support.
- Keep the injured area raised as much as possible.

DIAGNOSIS

- Consult a medical professional* especially if you are worried about the injury, or if the pain or swelling gets worse.
- If the pain or swelling has not gone down significantly within 48 hours, also seek treatment.

*such as a doctor or physiotherapist

Avoid H.A.R.M-ful factors

Avoid the H.A.R.M-ful factors for 72 hours after the injury:

HEAT

- Heat increases the bleeding at the injury site.
- Avoid hot baths and showers, saunas, hot water bottles, heat packs and liniments.

ALCOHOL

- Alcohol increases bleeding and swelling at the injury site, and delays healing.
- It can also mask the pain of the injury and its possible severity, which may result in the player not seeking treatment as early as they should.

RUNNING

- Running or any form of exercise will cause further damage.
- Players should not resume exercise within 72 hours of an injury unless a medical professional says it is all right to exercise.

MESSAGE

- Massage causes an increase in bleeding and swelling, and should be avoided within 72 hours of the injury.
- If the injury is massaged within the first 72 hours, it may take longer to heal.

Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation focuses on restoring the player's full functions and sport-specific abilities to prevent their re-injury and encourage the best possible performance. First, it is important to restore co-ordination, control, strength, flexibility, speed, balance and endurance. Then improve sport-specific skills such as kicking, swinging and throwing.

Rehabilitation and preparation for return to play have three phases (see diagram).

THREE PHASES FOR RETURN TO PLAY

PHASE 1: Acute Phase

Control and reduce the symptoms of a soft tissue injury e.g. pain, swelling, bruising by following the R.I.C.E.D. procedure and avoiding any H.A.R.M-ful factors.



PHASE 2: Rehabilitation

During the rehabilitation process the player needs to:

- Restore range of motion
- Restore co-ordination and control
- Restore strength and endurance
- Restore balance
- Maintain fitness
- Build confidence



PHASE 3: Return to Play

Restore sport-specific skills and techniques e.g. jumping, throwing, kicking. When the sport-specific skills can be done at the same level as they were before the injury, the player can return to the activity.

For free brochures on injury management which can be distributed to players, call 0800 THINKSAFE (0800 844 657).

An example

Ankle sprains are one of the most common sporting injuries. Outlined overleaf, as an example, are guidelines for a rehabilitation process for ankle sprains. These will help you establish when an injured player can return to training.

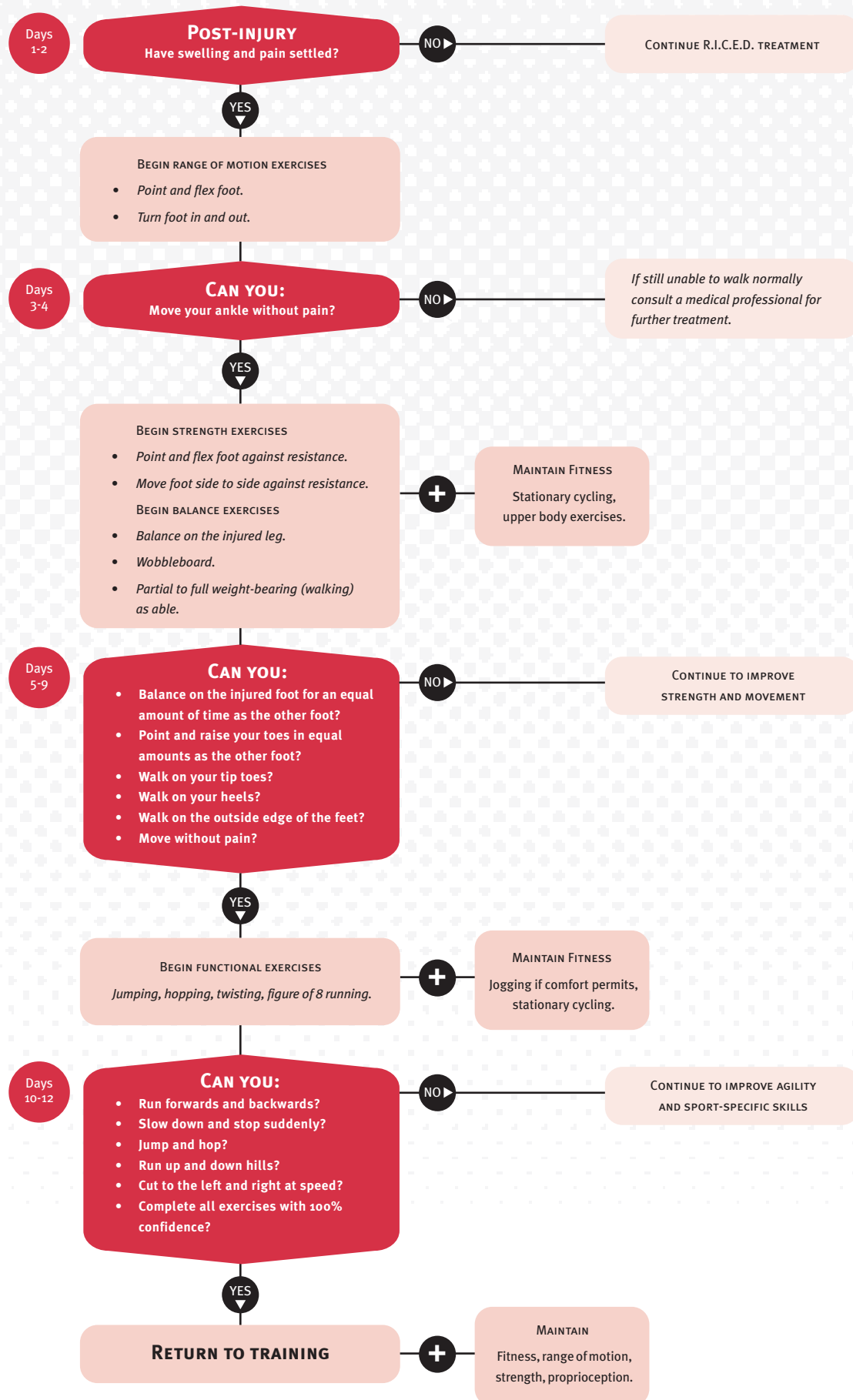
To assess whether the player can return to play, compare the injured and non-injured legs.

For guidelines on a rehabilitation process for other common sports injuries see www.acc.co.nz/sportsmart.

EXAMPLE OF A RETURN TO PLAY STRATEGY AFTER A MILD ANKLE SPRAIN

NOTE:

This is a guide only. Timeframes for rehabilitation and return to play vary depending on the nature and severity of the injury. Always seek the advice of a medical professional for a rehabilitation programme specific to you and your injury.



For more information on injury management, contact:
Sports Medicine New Zealand:
www.sportsmedicine.co.nz
or attend a first aid course.

THE 10-POINT ACTION PLAN FOR SPORTS INJURY PREVENTION

1
SCREENING

2
WARM-UP, COOL-DOWN AND STRETCH

3
PHYSICAL CONDITIONING

4
TECHNIQUE

5
FAIR PLAY

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PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

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HYDRATION AND NUTRITION

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INJURY REPORTING

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