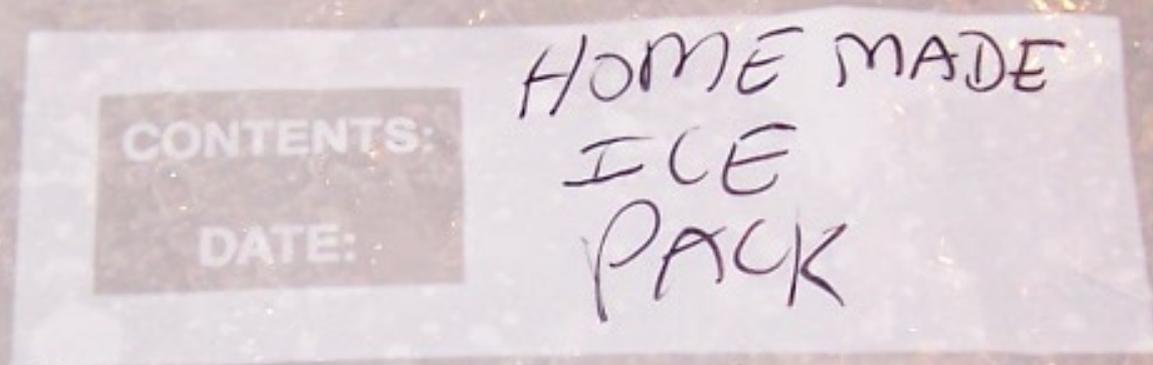


Homemade Ice and Heat Packs



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As simple as it may seem, heat or cold application can provide a surprising amount of pain relief for many types of pain. What is not commonly known is that Cold packs help reduce inflammation and numb painful areas and Heat packs help increase circulation to a specific area of the body and can promote healing.

An easy and inexpensive way to have access to these two modalities is to make your own heat and ice packs. This gives you the convenience of having one readily available wherever you may go.



Homemade Ice Packs

If you don't want to use your bag of frozen peas or corn every time your pain flares up, a gel ice pack can be a great way to get some fast relief. You can make a gallon sized gel pack for under \$3 and it stays colder longer than most vegetables.

What you'll need

- 1 gallon plastic freezer bag (you should 2 ply the bags in case of leakage)
- Water
- Rubbing alcohol

Homemade Ice and Heat Packs

Fill the plastic freezer bag with 2 cups of rubbing alcohol and 4 cups of water. For a less dense gel, reduce the amount of water. You can also increase the water amount to make the gel thicker. Try to get as much air out of the freezer bag before sealing it shut, then put it inside a second freezer bag- there is less chance of a leak. After placing in the freezer always remember to put a towel in between your skin and ice pack to avoid burning your skin. (It will take your ice pack about a day to freeze. If it is hard, just squeeze it once for it to return to gel state).

Homemade Moist Heat Packs

When injuries are no longer in the acute stage and ice isn't what your body needs, a heat pack can often bring much needed relief. Electric heating pads bring "dry heat", which many people find to be less comforting than moist heat. You can make your moist heat pack complicated and extravagant or go for a more simplistic take.

What you'll need

- Cloth container (sock, fabric, etc.)
- Filling (rice, flax seed, buckwheat, oatmeal, beans)
- Needle and Thread (optional, but recommended)
- Flair (ribbon, fragrant oils, optional)

Homemade Ice and Heat Packs

The easiest method is to get some uncooked rice (4-6 cups or about 2 pounds) and fill a clean tube sock, then tightly tie the sock closed. This will warm with about 1-3 minutes in the microwave. For a quick use a tied sock will do but if you plan to use the heat pack more than a couple of time you should make sure the filling is secure buy using a needle and thread because the knot can come undone. Other filling materials are flax seed, buckwheat, beans or oatmeal. For a craftier project, you can purchase fabric and make whatever shape and size you want. You can also add fragrant oil to infuse aromatherapy into the filling material or add a tied ribbon to glam up your heat pack.

At PHYSIO Physical Therapy and Wellness, we recommend that heat and ice packs are applied for 15 minutes or less each use.

If you feel that ice and heat are not alleviate the pain you are having you might want to come in for an evaluation with one of our therapists and try some of the many other revolutionary approaches we have for pain relief. In the meantime, enjoy your Homemade Ice and Heat Packs!



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