

**6 TIPS I LOVE TO HELP
PATIENTS MINIMIZE
THE IMPACT OF NEW
INJURIES**





Practical Injury Management: Navigating Tips for Active Adults

When an injury occurs, the first thing most people think of is how to manage it. It's understandable since it can be painful and limit mobility.

However, recommendations for injury management can change over time and can be overwhelming to decipher. Some suggestions include resting, using ice and compression, getting imaging, taking anti-inflammatories, seeing a physical therapist or chiropractor, or even ignoring the pain altogether. It can be difficult to know which approach is right for you given the abundance of advice from friends and family.

Here, we've compiled some actionable tips to help with non-traumatic aches, injuries, or pain that can be applied to various situations.

TIP

01

Stay Active



RECONSIDERING REST: THE ROLE OF MOVEMENT IN POST-INJURY RECOVERY

While your initial instinct might be to take a break and rest for a while after an injury, the latest research doesn't quite align with that idea.

Now, I'm not suggesting you completely ignore the need for some unloading or downtime, but extended periods of complete rest may actually impede your recovery. Our bodies are built for movement—our muscles, tendons, and bones thrive on it. Therefore, cutting out activity for too long can work against the healing process.

The key after an injury is to stay as active as your body allows. Gently work the injured area within its comfortable range of motion. Avoid pushing it too hard, but ensure you keep it in motion. This promotes fluid circulation around the joint, preventing excessive swelling. In the recovery journey, movement is your ally.



**ROAD TO
RECOVERY**

TIP

02

*Modify
Movements*



SMART ADJUSTMENTS: NAVIGATING ACTIVITY MODIFICATIONS AFTER AN INJURY

After an injury, the next concern that often pops up is figuring out how to deal with activities or exercises that now cause pain.

The simplest approach is to modify those activities, if possible. For instance, if bending down for an item hurts your knee, try a staggered lunge instead. If reaching overhead bothers your shoulder, using a chair to bring things to shoulder height might be more comfortable. Swap out painful movements temporarily to give your injured body part a chance to recover.

Another piece of advice is to avoid unnecessary over modifications. If squatting with 30 pounds hurts your knee, but you can manage 15 pounds without issues, stick with the lighter option. Over-modifying can set you back more than necessary in your recovery.



4 SIMPLEST WAYS TO MODIFY EXERCISES

SHORTEN THE RANGE OF MOTION

Reducing the range of motion of exercise can be enough of a modification to reduce pain.

For example, going from doing a squat to full depth to a box squat aimed at a bench.

REDUCE THE WEIGHT

This one may seem simple, but lowering the weight is another modification that can help to reduce pain.

For example, taking your barbell back squat from 185 pounds to a more manageable 155 pounds.

CHANGE THE STYLE

This modification suggests using another type of the same movement. This can help change the dynamics and force profile making it easier on your injured body part.

For example, going from a barbell back squat which places more load on the back/hip to a front squat or goblet squat which places more load on the knee/quadriceps.

USE AN ASSISTED VARIATION

The last modification you can attempt if all else fails is using an assisted version of the exercise you want to do. An assisted version allows you to complete the same movement, but with the assistance of external force or other body parts.

For example, if air squatting hurts try TRX or ring squats as they allow you to assist with your arms taking load of your legs.



TIP

03

*Ice &
Anti-Inflammatories?*

ICE AFTER INJURY: NAVIGATING THE COOLING CONTROVERSY FOR PAIN RELIEF

Many people automatically turn to R.I.C.E (Rest, Ice, Compression, Elevation) when they get hurt.

However, there's some debate about using ice and anti-inflammatories.

The concern is that they might slow down the body's natural healing process by dampening inflammation. After an injury, we actually want the body to go through its normal inflammation process, so using things that slow it down might not be the best idea.

On the flip side, we're not exactly sure yet to what degree ice and anti-inflammatories delay the healing process. We also certainly know they can help reduce pain after a fresh injury.

My advice is, if the pain is really intense and limiting your ability to move, go ahead and use ice and anti-inflammatories. But if the pain is manageable, it's better to avoid them because there's no need to slow down healing if you can tolerate the pain.





TIP

04

Sleep

SLEEP: A VITAL INGREDIENT IN THE RECIPE FOR HEALING AND WELL-BEING

Getting 7–8 hours of sleep for good health is not a new idea, but how many of us actually do it?

We all know that person who brags about working or hustling all day with minimal sleep—maybe a family member or an overachieving colleague. The truth is, that person will eventually burn out, despite what they believe. Science tells us that very few people—only 1 to 3 percent—can actually function well with less than 6 hours of sleep consistently.

Moreover, insufficient sleep has been linked to various health issues like obesity, heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, stroke, and Alzheimer's. Not surprisingly, there's a connection between sleep and healing too. Some studies suggest that people who consistently get poor sleep may take 30–40 percent longer to recover from an injury.

Consider this in a standard 3-month injury recovery: now you're looking at an extra month of discomfort just because you're not getting enough sleep. Sleep is an easy win that can make a big difference. If you're dealing with an injury, aim for 7–8 hours of sleep whenever possible to help with the healing process.



HOW TO SET UP FOR OPTIMAL SLEEP

- Try to stick to a sleep schedule - wake up and go to bed at a similar time
- Exercise 20 min each day - avoid the 2 - 3 hrs before bed
- Avoid caffeine or nicotine within 6 hours of bedtime
- Similarly avoid alcohol when possible within 6 hours of bed
- Don't consume too much water within 1 - 2 hrs before bed
- Avoid napping after 3 p.m.
- Take a hot bath or shower before bed
- Keep your bedroom dark and cool
- Make sure your bedroom is gadget free or use blue light glasses
- Get some sunlight exposure in the morning
- Try to do something relaxing, like reading, before bed
- If you cannot sleep after 20 - 30 minutes get out of bed and do something that makes you tired

A woman in a black tank top is shown from the chest up, drinking from a grey protein shaker bottle. The background is a blurred gym with various pieces of equipment and lights. The text 'TIP 05 Protein' is overlaid on the right side of the image.

TIP

05

Protein

PROTEIN POWER: BUILDING STRENGTH AND RECOVERY FOR ORTHOPEDIC INJURIES

Maintaining muscle, tendon, and bone health is crucial when dealing with an orthopedic injury. That's why getting enough protein is super important, especially during an injury. Protein is like the building block for muscle. If you don't have enough of it in your diet, your muscles won't grow properly. Just having an adequate amount of protein can kickstart the body processes needed for muscle building, even without intense workouts.

This is especially relevant for someone with an injury who might be exercising less or at a lower intensity. For protein intake, aim for at least 0.6–0.8 grams per pound if you're into strength or power activities. The numbers may be different for people who aren't very active, endurance athletes, or those in specific sports.

So, if you're a 200-pound strength athlete dealing with an injury, you should try to consume between 120 and 160 grams of protein. This ensures your body is in top shape for rebuilding muscle. The less muscle, tendon, and bone strength we lose during an injury, the quicker we can get back to doing the things we love!



TIP

06

*Move Locally &
Globally*



OPTIMIZING MOVEMENT: STRATEGIES FOR LOCAL AND GLOBAL MOVEMENT

A key part of handling an injury is knowing how to care for the affected area. Let's break it down a bit more using the above tips of "staying active" and "not regressing more than necessary."

First off, we want to **MOVE LOCALLY**. This means gently moving the injured part as much as it can handle. For instance, if your knee is hurt, you can lay down and slide it back and forth within your comfort zone. I usually suggest staying at a pain level of 3-4/10 or below early on when moving an involved area. Find a few stretches or easy movements that let you work your injured part with relatively low pain.

Another important tip is to find **THE HARDEST THING YOU DO WELL** this should serve as your starting point to build back up. If you're a runner and running 5 miles hurts, but 2-3 miles is okay, don't stop running altogether. Overdoing regression or rest after an injury only sets us back.

Now, **MOVE GLOBALLY** is about the rest of your body and workout plan. Often, when we get injured, we stop all our fitness activities. As we discussed earlier, movement is good, especially if it's not painful. So, for your overall fitness, don't decrease the intensity or volume if you can still manage. If you have a lower body injury but can push your upper body hard, go for it! If you have a knee issue but can still do deadlifts, go ahead! Challenging your body, keeping your heart rate up, and staying social with friends during an injury is an underrated way to help your body heal!

QUESTIONS ABOUT MANAGING YOUR INJURY?

Managing an injury can absolutely be tricky. Every single one of us is totally different. Our training history, lifestyle, sleep quality, nutrition, past experiences, and injury all impact how we recover.

This is also the reason why trying to google "what exercises should I do for my X injury" doesn't always work.

With this guide I tried to provide some overarching concepts and themes that should be applicable to almost any non-traumatic orthopedic injury, ache, or pain. My hope is that all of these tips can keep you out of my office or any other medical office.

If you're still unsure about how to manage an injury you're dealing with or feel that your current PT isn't challenging or helping you reach your active fitness or sports goals, feel free to reach out to me in the gym, via e-mail @

info@apexperformancept.com or by phone **203-939-8156**.

You can also scan the QR code below and I'd be more than happy to set up a **FREE** discovery call with you to discuss how I can help you manage your injury and return to your fitness or sports goals!

