Muscle Strain: Care Instructions

Your Care Instructions

A muscle strain happens when you overstretch, or pull, a muscle. It can happen when you exercise or lift something or when you have an accident. Rest and other home care can help the muscle heal.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

How can you care for yourself at home?

- Rest the strained muscle. Do not put weight on it for a day or two. If your doctor advises you to, use crutches or a sling to rest a sore limb.
- Put ice or a cold pack on the sore muscle for 10 to 20 minutes at a time to stop swelling. Put a thin cloth between the ice pack and your skin.
- Prop up the sore arm or leg on a pillow when you ice it or anytime you sit or lie down during the next 3 days. Try to keep it above the level of your heart. This will help reduce swelling.
- Take pain medicines exactly as directed.
    - If the doctor gave you a prescription medicine for pain, take it as prescribed.
    - If you are not taking a prescription pain medicine, ask your doctor if you can take an over-the-counter medicine.
- Do not do anything that makes the pain worse. Return to exercise gradually as you feel better.

When should you call for help?

Call your doctor now or seek immediate medical care if:

- You have new severe pain.
- Your injured limb is cool or pale or changes color.
- You have tingling, weakness, or numbness in your injured limb.
- You cannot move the injured area.

Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor if:

- You cannot put weight on a joint, or it feels unsteady when you walk.
- Pain and swelling get worse or do not start to get better after 2 days of home treatment.

Where can you learn more?

Go to https://www.healthwise.net/patiented

Enter **C862** in the search box to learn more about **"Muscle Strain: Care Instructions".**

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