

First Aid

Sometimes, back and neck pain may be lessened by using first aid remedies at home. The remedies included here are not meant to replace the advice or treatment of a doctor and by listing them on our site we are not recommending them for everyone with back and neck pain. If pain is severe

or continues, call your doctor or make an appointment with a Texas Back Institute specialist or chiropractor. **If you experience increased pain when using these remedies, stop immediately and contact your doctor.**

ANTI-INFLAMMATORIES:

Aspirin or ibuprofen are anti-inflammatories and should decrease the swelling present in the nerves and muscles. Aspirin substitutes do not have anti-inflammatory properties. Follow instructions on bottle for proper dosage. Should you experience stomach upset or ringing in your ears, discontinue taking the aspirin or ibuprofen. **If you have a history of ulcers or have had surgery, DO NOT TAKE ANTI-INFLAMMATORIES.**

ICE MASSAGE:

When to do it: When experiencing back spasms or any level of discomfort in your back, shoulders or neck.

What it does: Breaks the pain-spasm cycle between the nerves by slowing down the nerve impulses, numbing the area and decreasing pain and swelling.

How to do it: Freeze water in a paper or styrofoam cup. Peel the bottom inch or two off the cup.

Either lie on your stomach with a pillow under your stomach and have someone give you ice massage, or lie on your side and give it to yourself. Ice massage is also very effective for muscle spasms in your neck. Gently massage a 4" by 6" area in a circular motion over the muscle spasm or the area where you feel the pain. This is done on either side of your spine, but not directly on the bone.

How long: For 5-7 minutes. No longer than 7 minutes. You don't want to get frostbite!

How often: Ice massage can be given every hour. The more frequently ice massage is applied, the more likely the reduction of muscle spasm and discomfort.



Ice Pack: If cups of frozen water are not available, a sealed bag filled with ice cubes can become an ice pack. Or, you can use a commercial ice pack. Place the ice pack on a thin shirt or towel over the area where you feel pain for 20 minutes. Then follow the recommended stretching.



MOVEMENT OR STRETCHING:

Knee to Chest Stretch: Immediately after the ice massage, lie on your back and bring your knees toward your chest. You can bring one knee up or both knees at the same time. Hold the position for at least a minute. This will help stretch the muscles back to their normal limits.



Mountain and Sag Stretch: Start on hands and knees. Make a mountain out of your back, then let sag like an old horse. Do this stretch slowly and deliberately. Repeat 5 - 10 times. This will be effective following ice massage and as part of your regular stretching routine.

