

# Sprain and strain



**IN A MEDICAL EMERGENCY  
CALL TRIPLE ZERO (000) FOR AN AMBULANCE.**

**DRSABCD** Danger ► Response ► Send for help ► Airway ► Breathing ► CPR ► Defibrillation

The DRSABCD Action Plan is the first step when providing first aid. Use this to assess the immediate situation. [DOWNLOAD THE DRSABCD FACT SHEET.](#)

## WARNING

It can be difficult to tell whether an injury is a fracture, dislocation, sprain or strain. If in doubt, always treat as a fracture.

## SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

### SPRAIN

- intense pain
- restricted movement of the injured joint
- rapid development of swelling and bruising

### STRAIN

- sharp, sudden pain in the region of the injury
- usually loss of power
- muscle tenderness

## WHAT TO DO

- 1 Follow DRSABCD.
- 2 Follow **RICE**:
  - **Rest** – rest the patient and the injured part
  - **Ice** – apply an ice pack or cold pack for 15 minutes every 2 hours for 24 hours, then for 15 minutes every 4 hours for 24 hours
  - **Compression** – apply a compression bandage firmly to extend well beyond the injury
  - **Elevation** – elevate the injured part.
- 3 Avoid **HARM**:
  - Heat
  - Alcohol
  - Running or other exercise of the injured area
  - Massage.
- 4 Seek medical aid.

**YOU COULD SAVE A LIFE WITH FIRST AID TRAINING [WWW.STJOHN.ORG.AU](http://WWW.STJOHN.ORG.AU) • 1300 360 455**

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