

Essential Heat & Ice Guide to Postpartum Recovery





Hey there! I'm Ashlea.

Being a mom of two littles is exciting and overwhelming at the same time! I live in North Carolina by the beach with my supportive and loving husband, and one fur-baby.

Ever since, I took my first health class in High School, I have been hooked on science and the body. I remember when I was younger, I wanted to work with babies however, I am now focused on helping the amazing moms of the sweet babies!

Having over 20 years of experience, including a degree in biology, a minor in chemistry, and being licensed as a physical therapist assistant has given me the ability to teach hundreds of mothers to find immediate relief through proper body movement.

I am passionate about helping postpartum moms because I know what they are going through. I have been there myself. I have two kids, and I experienced the fourth trimester of postpartum firsthand.

I remember going through a lot physically and emotionally after my two babies. As postpartum moms we are recovering from childbirth, adjusting to our new role as a parent(s), and often struggling with the fourth trimester of postpartum.

Having support and taking care of myself was a huge need of mine to get through the difficult times. I know that postpartum moms need support. They need someone to help them feel their best physically and emotionally. That's why I do what I do.

Since being in the physical therapy world, my friends who became moms asked me, "Can I use heat and ice for this and that?" "What should I put on my back when it's tight?" "What should I not use when my hip joint feels inflamed?" So, I created this "Heat or Ice?" cheat sheet as a great start.

Postpartum stretching is an important part of a healthy recovery after childbirth. It can help to improve flexibility, reduce pain, prevent injuries, improve posture, boost mood, reduce stress, improve sleep, and increase energy levels. And knowing when to use heat or/and ice can be very beneficial in the recovery process.

I am grateful for the opportunity to help postpartum moms. I know that I am making a difference in their lives, and that is what continues to motivate me.

Stay amazing.

Ashlea



Heat or Ice?

Picture this: you've twisted your knee while exercising. Reaching for the nearest remedy, you wonder – heat or ice? This seemingly simple question holds surprisingly important consequences. Choosing the right one can accelerate healing and ease pain, while the wrong one can aggravate the injury and hinder recovery.

So, why does knowing when to use heat or ice matter?

It all boils down to their opposing effects:

HOT	PURPOSE	COLD
YES	RELIEVES MUSCLE SORENESS	YES
NO	REDUCES FEVER	YES
NO	REDUCES PAIN	YES
YES	RELAXES MUSCLES	NO
YES	IMPROVES CIRCULATION	NO
YES	LOOSENS STIFF JOINTS	NO
YES	RELIEVES HEADACHES	YES
YES	HELPS YOU FALL ASLEEP	NO
NO	REDUCES SWELLING & INFLAMMATION	YES

stretchwithashlea.com

Note: Please consult with a doctor or other healthcare professional before starting any new stretching routine. More information, see <https://stretchwithashlea.com/disclaimer>.



Ice

- **After an injury:** Ice can help to reduce pain, swelling, and inflammation. It is especially helpful for acute injuries, such as sprains, strains, and bruises.
- **After surgery:** Ice can help to reduce pain and swelling after surgery. It can also help to prevent blood clots.
- **To relieve muscle soreness:** Ice can help to reduce muscle soreness after exercise. It can also help to prevent injuries.
- **To reduce fever:** Ice can help to reduce fever by lowering the body's core temperature.
- **To reduce inflammation:** Ice can help reduce inflammation around joints and muscles.
- **To relieve headaches:** Ice can help to reduce pain and inflammation from headaches.

Here are some tips for using ice on your body:

- **Always wrap the ice in a towel, pillowcase, or cloth to protect your skin. DO NOT apply ice directly to your skin.**
- **Apply the ice for no more than 20 minutes at a time, followed by a 20-minute rest period.**
- **If you have any concerns about using ice, talk to your doctor.**

It is important to note that ice should not be used for all types of injuries. For example, ice should not be used on open wounds or on areas of the body that have lost feeling. If you are not sure whether or not you should use ice, talk to your doctor.

Heat

- **To relieve muscle pain:** Heat can help to relax muscles and reduce pain. It is often used for chronic pain, such as muscle spasms or arthritis.
- **To improve circulation:** Heat can help to improve circulation and reduce pain. It is often used for cold hands or feet.
- **To loosen stiff joints:** Heat can help to loosen **stiff joints** and improve range of motion. It is often used for arthritis or other joint problems.
- **To relieve menstrual cramps:** Heat can help to relieve menstrual cramps by relaxing the muscles of the uterus.
- **To help you fall asleep:** Heat can help you fall asleep by relaxing your muscles and making you feel more comfortable.

Here are some tips for using heat on your body:

- **Use a heating pad, hot water bottle, or warm compress.**
- **Apply the heat for no more than 20 minutes at a time, followed by a 20-minute rest period.**
- **DO NOT apply heated items directly to your skin. Use a barrier such as a towel.**
- **If you have any concerns about using heat, talk to your doctor.**

It is important to note that heat should not be used for all types of injuries. For example, heat should not be used on open wounds or on areas of the body that have lost feeling. If you are not sure whether or not you should use heat, talk to your doctor.

As you can see, ice and heat have different effects on the body. Ice is typically used to reduce pain, swelling, and inflammation; while heat is typically used to relax muscles and improve circulation.



3 Ways To Make Homemade Ice Packs

Instructions:

Method 1 – Dish Dawn Soap – Pour some dish soap into a Ziploc bag and place in the freezer. Make sure to lie bag flat in freezer. After about 2 hours it will be a softer type of ice pack. If left in the freezer longer, it will become a harder ice pack but can be broken up.

Method 2 – Corn Syrup – Pour some corn syrup into a Ziploc bag and place in the freezer. It will become gel-like and not freeze solid.

Method 3 – Rubbing Alcohol – Pour 1½ cups water and ½ cup rubbing alcohol (70% isopropyl alcohol) into a quart size Ziploc bag and place in the freezer. You can make different versions of this method by using different proportions of each as long as there is more water.

Tip: Instead of using Ziploc bags, you can use FoodSaver bags and use the Seal function to make a more durable bag.

