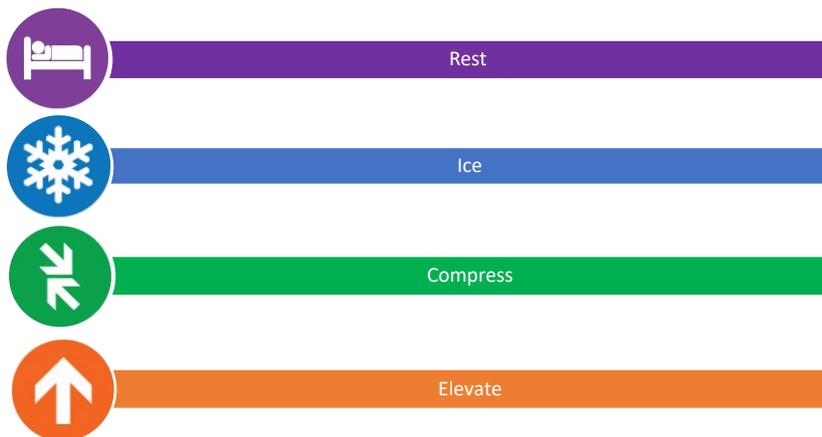


RICE MEAT POLICE

There has been talk regarding the management of acute injuries especially from a physiotherapy perspective. Do we still follow the traditional RICE principle? Or do we move with the times and follow the MEAT or POLICE approach?

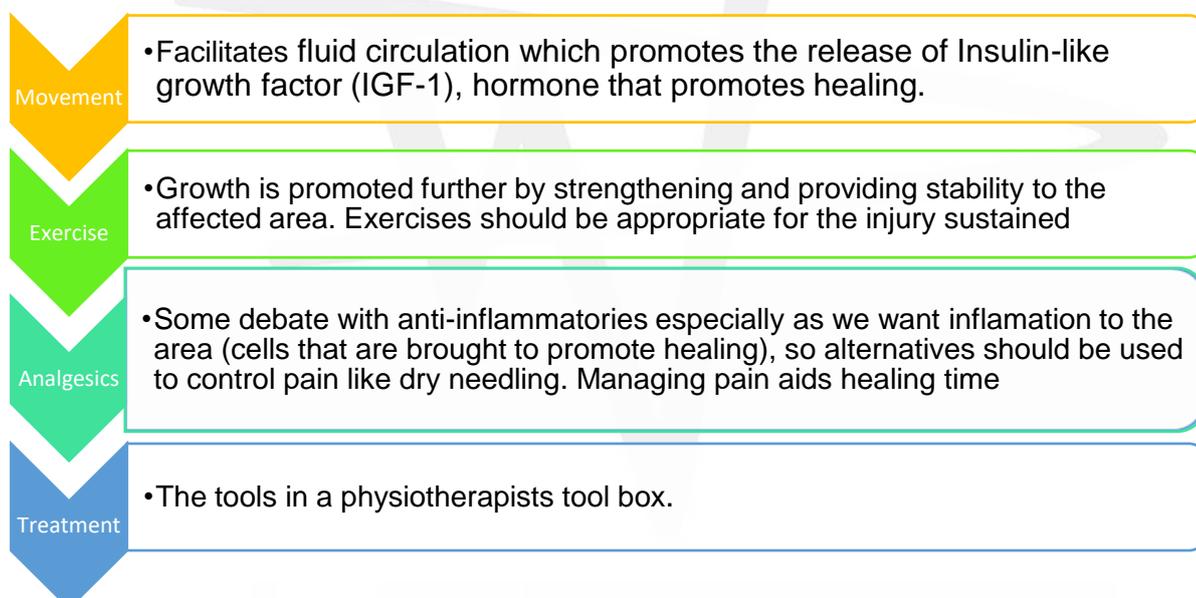
Let's just run through the 3 principles, to get up to speed with what is happening.



RICE was the initial form of management that coaches and teachers would recommend when someone sustained an injury. Due to the ever-evolving research in the medical field the shift from RICE has occurred, to where disadvantages outweigh the advantages. Ice is a big contributor to the controversy, reason being that ice causes vasoconstriction to the blood vessels which means the inflammatory cells are being delayed, prolonging healing time. But there is an upside to ice as it does relieve pain within the initial 72 hours post injury.

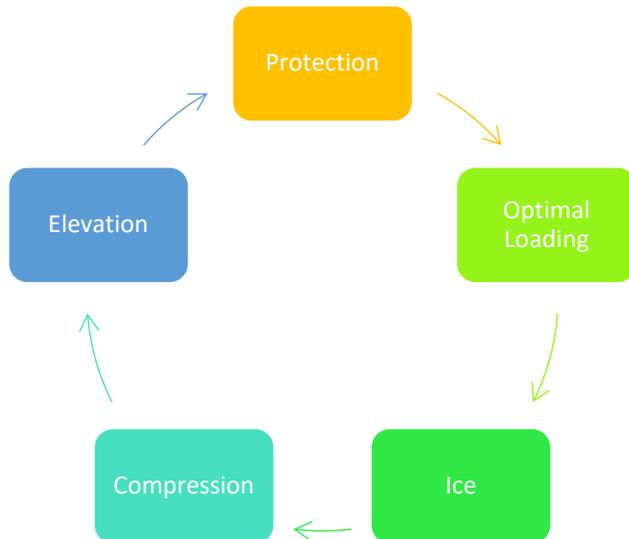
Rest, Compression and Elevation are important elements but shouldn't be taken literally. Everything in moderation. No extreme rest, compression where a joint is completely immobilised and elevation that stops blood flow.

RICE is not a bad principle to follow but it has its flaws and that's why MEAT was formed.



The two work hand in hand. And the gold standard should always be, patient dependant.

So where does POLICE come from? And no not the stomach in chest out type that we have in South Africa.



From RICE to PRICE and eventually POLICE. Rest is now replaced with Optimal Loading, which means having a balanced and specific rehabilitation programme where early movement encourages early recovery ([Bleakley et al, 2012](#)). The shift is brought on due to the fact that rest resulted in more wasting of the injured structure which causes more damage. The benefits of earlier mobilisation and functional training are proving to be more effective in the long run for muscle injuries as compared to complete rest. Mindset needs to shift to an active recovery with a rehab aspect to prevent an injury heading into chronic status.

When it comes to acute tendon and ligament injuries the jury still needs to provide us with a verdict. The only reason this is the case, is because these structures are supposedly avascular.

When treating an acute injury, it is important to do an effective assessment on the patient and find out what the patients expectations are. From them, you will gauge the type of management that needs to take place. The RICE age is melting and it could be safe to say that the POLICE are running the injuries now.

