

# Muscle Strains and Tears

Muscle strains are common. They can occur when you stretch or reach out past your normal range while running, playing sport, gardening etc.

A muscle tear is more serious as some of the muscle fibres will be broken.

## Treatment

Initial treatment for both injuries involves **RICED**.

- R** Rest – stop the activity you are doing to avoid further damage
- I** Ice – place crushed ice wrapped in a damp towel on the injured area for 20 minutes every 2 hours for the first 48 hours.
- C** Compression – firm bandaging helps reduce swelling and bleeding
- E** Elevation - keep the affected area raised as much as possible
- D** Diagnosis – it is very important to see your doctor or physiotherapist if the pain and swelling gets worse or you have not improved after a couple of days

## Prevention

The best way to prevent muscle strains and tears is to include a warm-up programme before starting any exercise, and then cool down and stretch when you have finished the activity. Advice on warm-up programmes and cool-down activities can be obtained from your local physiotherapist or from the ACC website.

## Recovery

Following an injury, your physiotherapist can help your rehabilitation.

*The earlier you get help, the faster your injury is likely to heal.*

Treatment will include an exercise programme, possibly with the use of some gym equipment to increase your strength and co-ordination and restore any movement lost in the joint.

If you are a keen sportsperson your physiotherapist can help you with your training programme to decrease the chance of re-injury.

ACC has produced a wide range of resources on injury prevention:  
[www.acc.co.nz](http://www.acc.co.nz) - Injury Prevention.