

Sprains and Strains

Lots of people use the first sunny spring days for exercise outdoors. Which is all well, but some of them forget that they haven't been out for months. The first thing to remind them of this is a **pulled muscle**.

An **injury to soft tissue** such as muscles, **tendons** and **ligaments** should be treated immediately. The first thing to do is use the RICE method. RICE is a **mnemonic** that stands for: rest, which will help the body to start recovering, ice, to cool down any swelling associated with soft tissue damage, compression helps to reduce **oedematous** swelling caused by the **inflammatory process**,

and **elevation** is used to reduce swelling by increasing venous blood return to the **systemic circulation**.

Male pharmacy customer (limping into the pharmacy): Hello, I think I may have injured my **calf** muscle yesterday evening when I was jogging. It hurt just a little when I got home, so I thought that it was just **muscle stiffness** from not doing a cool down. This morning it really hurts!

PTA: Is your calf tender?

Yes, it is quite tender and warm to touch, which is unusual.

Well the warmth is probably from a strain. The calf feels warm because it is probably **inflamed** and has a few **micro-tears**. **According** to several new sport-medicine studies, micro-tears are the main cause of muscle stiffness after sport.

Now, I didn't know that!

The micro-tears usually occur when the muscles are not warmed up, or stretched a little before doing any sporting activity.

Yesterday was the first time I'd been jogging since last October. I met a few friends after work to go jogging, but I came a little late and wasn't really warmed up when we started.

Don't worry, we'll soon get you "up and running" again! Do you have any gel-packs at home? You see

cooling is one of the first steps to take with a strained muscle.

No, I don't. Do you have them? Certainly, we even have pre-cooled ones for cases like yours! Shall I get you one?

Yes, please. What else do you recommend?

A non-steroid anti-inflammatory drug such as diclofenac or ibuprofen. And an anti-inflammatory gel that can be **applied to** the **affected area**.

I'll take the diclofenac products. How often can I use them?

Well, you could take two tablets now and two later but not within a six-hour period. Diclofenac does tend to affect the **mucous membrane** of the **stomach**, so you should try and take it after meals. You can use the gel now and before you go to bed.

Good, I hope it works! Thank you for your help.

You are welcome. Oh, before I forget: you should put your leg up when you get home, this will help the venous blood to get back in the system and take the pressure off your lower leg. The calf muscle is an important "pump" for the blood in the legs!

I certainly will! Thanks again, bye! ■

*Catherine Croghan,
Lecturer in English and native speaker*

VOCABULARY

sprains and strains	Verstauchungen und Zerrungen
pulled muscle	Muskelzerrung
injury	Verletzung
soft tissue	Weichgewebe
tendons	Sehnen
ligaments	Bänder
mnemonic	Eselsbrücke, Gedächtnisstütze
oedematous	ödematös
inflammatory process	Entzündungsvorgang
elevation	Erhöhung, Hochlegen
systemic circulation	größer Blutkreislauf
limping	humpeln
calf	Wade
muscle stiffness	Muskelkater
tender	tast- und druckempfindlich
inflamed	entzündet, gereizt
micro-tears	Mikrorisse
according to	gemäß
applied to	aufgetragen
affected area	betroffenen Bereich
mucous membrane	Schleimhaut
stomach	Magen

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