



University of North Carolina Wilmington
Abrons Student Health Center

INSTRUCTION SHEET: KNEE INJURY, MILD Treatment: Immobilizer / Wrap / Brace

The Student Health Provider has diagnosed an injury of your knee, most likely a mild sprain. A sprain is a stretching or tear in the ligaments and tendons (rope-like bands holding bones and muscles in place) of a joint. No severe sprain, significant fracture (break) or dislocation is apparent.

Nevertheless, even a mild sprain is a significant injury to the joint, and should be *treated*, not ignored. Treatment can help prevent long-term problems with the knee. Also, **most importantly, please realize that if your symptoms persist, repeat evaluation is necessary.**

MEASURES YOU SHOULD TAKE TO HELP TREAT YOUR KNEE INJURY:

1. Above all, put the knee to rest! Resting the knee not only decreases pain, it also helps heal the knee more quickly. Stay off the leg as much as possible the next two days. Wear the immobilizer/brace/wrap. After two to three days, gradually ease back into a normal amount of walking. If the knee begins to hurt, cut back on walking again.
2. Wear the knee immobilizer/brace/wrap whenever you are awake. The knee immobilizer/brace/wrap supports the knee and helps prevent further injury.
3. Elevating the knee will reduce swelling, especially in the first 48 hours after injury. Keep the knee up on pillows, above the level of the heart.
4. Apply cold packs to the knee off-and-on for the first 48 hours after injury. Cold helps ease discomfort and prevent additional swelling. Do not apply ice directly to the knee, causing discomfort. Rather, aim for coolness, yet comfort, applying a layer or two of cloth between the cold pack and knee.
5. After 48 hours, apply heat in the form of warm soaks. Moist heat increases blood circulation in the knee tissues, promoting healing.
6. If you are not showing progressive, steady improvement over the next three to five days, return to the Student Health Center. If the knee is not feeling back to normal within three to four weeks, return to the Student Health Center for re-check.
7. If you are having severe pain or an unusual problem, return to the Student Health Center or see your personal/referral provider promptly.
8. Allow at least four weeks for the knee to heal before you attempt any sports (longer if activity causes discomfort). Realize that once a knee is sprained, it may be prone to further injury. Allow the knee to *fully* heal before you attempt any sports. Avoid contact sports long-term if possible.