



# Advice for Soft Tissue Injuries

Information for patients  
Physiotherapy Department





## WHAT IS A SOFT TISSUE INJURY?

This is a common injury and means that there is an injury to a ligament, tendon, or muscle. These areas of the body can become injured after a trauma and can sometimes be described as a 'strain' or 'sprain'. After an injury, your body works hard to repair, recover, and renew the affected area.

### **Symptoms can include:**

- ❖ Pain
- ❖ Swelling
- ❖ Difficulty moving the injured part
- ❖ Reduced strength
- ❖ Bruising

### **Common causes for soft tissue injuries:**

- ❖ Overstretching a muscle, tendon, or ligament
- ❖ Impact or a direct blow to an area of the body
- ❖ Not warming up properly before sport
- ❖ Too many Repetitive actions
- ❖ Returning to sport too soon following an injury

## **How long will it take to recover from a soft tissue injury:**

Most soft tissue injuries heal without any problems in about 6-12 weeks. With some more severe injuries it may take several months to fully recover. Swelling can last for a couple of weeks but should gradually decrease with this time.

If the pain is severe and you are unable to walk or move the effected limb you should contact your local Accident and Emergency or minor injuries department. If the injured area does not seem to be improving within 2 weeks of the injury you should visit or contact your GP. You can also self-refer to your local Physiotherapy service for assessment and treatment on our website: <https://www.nhslanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk/services/physiotherapy-msk/>



## **Help to avoid injury:**

- ❖ Warm up before exercise
- ❖ Gradually build up exercise over time
- ❖ Wear appropriate footwear that is well fitted and provides appropriate support for the surface
- ❖ Maintain hydration before, during and after events

## **TREATMENT**

There are a few things that you can do to help with your recovery and get you back to your usual activities. Peace and love are an acronym follow each part of this to optimise your recovery.

### **P – Protect**

Restrict/reduce movement for the first 1-3 days. This helps minimise bleeding and reduces the risk of re-injury. A support or walking aid may help in these initial few days.

### **E – Elevate**

Elevate limb higher than your heart to promote fluid reduction from site of injury.

### **A – Avoid anti-inflammatories**

The body creates a healing response when injured. The use of anti-inflammatories reduces the body's natural response to healing which can delay healing time. Simple analgesics like paracetamol should be used for pain relief if required.

### **C – Compression**

Using compression on an injury can reduce swelling. The use of a compression bandage for a short period of time can help create enough compression to reduce swelling.

### **E – Education**

Avoid passive treatments and focus on exercise-based treatments to improve your symptoms. Be patient, your body will take its time to heal. Everyone's healing time will be different as not every injury is the same.

## **AFTER 3 DAYS YOU SHOULD PROGRESS ON TO THE FOLLOWING**

### **L – Load**

Movement and exercise help soft tissue injuries. Let pain act as a guide for returning to normal activities. Increasing load helps promote tissue repair and tolerance. Listen to your body and try to do more within the limits of your pain. Your body will let you know when it is safe to increase load.

### **O – Optimism**

Science has shown that depression and fear about injury can result in worse outcomes. Be confident and positive about your recovery. Staying realistic and positive is important, your brain plays a part in your recovery.

### **V – Vascularisation**

This is a fancy word for blood flow, blood flow means more oxygen to the area providing essential building blocks for tissue repair. Keep active and use pain free cardiovascular activities such as using the static bike or swimming to help increase blood flow to the injury site. These activities should be pain free.

### **E – Exercise**

Strength, stretching and balance exercises within the limits of your pain can help you restore normal function by taking an active approach to your recovery.



## CONFIDENTIALITY AND THE USE OF PATIENT INFORMATION

NHS Lanarkshire take care to ensure your personal information is only accessible to authorised people. Our staff have a legal and contractual duty to keep personal health information secure, and confidential. In order to find out more about current data protection legislation and how we process your information, please visit the Data Protection Notice on our website at [www.nhslanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.nhslanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk) or ask a member of staff for a copy of our Data Protection Notice.

**NHS Lanarkshire** - for local services and the latest health news visit [www.nhslanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.nhslanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk)  
NHS Lanarkshire General  
Enquiry Line: 0300 30 30 243

**NHS inform** - The national health information service for Scotland.  
[www.nhsinform.co.uk](http://www.nhsinform.co.uk)  
Tel No: 0800 22 44 88

If you need this information in another language or format, please e-mail: Translation.  
[Services@lanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:Services@lanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk)



[www.careopinion.org.uk](http://www.careopinion.org.uk)

These leaflets have been adapted from information leaflets originally produced for NHS Greater Glasgow by Heather Sharp and Jayne Moyles.

Pub. date:	April 2024
Review date:	April 2026
Issue No.	08
Dept:	Physiotherapy
Clinical Lead:	

XS PIL.A4SSTI.24\_08078.L