



The University of West Alabama
Athletic Training & Sports Medicine Center

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EDEMA MANAGEMENT

For a quicker recovery, it is very important to minimize swelling. There are several techniques which may be utilized. Your physician, athletic trainer, or physical therapist will indicate with a check mark which techniques you should follow.

1. KEEP YOUR HAND ELEVATED

Keep your hand higher than your elbow and your elbow higher than your heart whenever possible. Sleep with your hand elevated on pillows.

2. EXERCISE WITH YOUR HAND ELEVATED

Your athletic trainer or physical therapist will instruct you in a specific exercise program to meet your particular needs. Always exercise in an elevated position to decrease swelling (as described above).

3. USE RETROGRADE MASSAGE

With your hand elevated according to #1, you may help push or squeeze fluid out of your hand and into your arm for it to be circulated properly. Begin at your fingernail, use lotion or oil and push in a downward motion toward your elbow, squeezing the fluid out of your hand and wrist. Do each finger individually. Repeat for 5-15 minutes depending on amount of swelling.

4. ICE PACKS MAY BE USED

If your athletic trainer or physical therapist recommends, ice packs may be applied for 20 minutes to decrease swelling. To make them, use 2 ziplock bags per ice pack (heavy duty type work best). Put one ziplock bag inside the other and in the inner ziplock bag, combine 2 parts water with 1 part rubbing alcohol. It works better to have 2 packs -- one for palm side and one for the back side of hand. Put in freezer until it becomes slush. Remove, use on hand for 20 minutes, refreeze.

5. EXTERNAL COMPRESSION

- a. Coban Wrap
- b. Compression glove

***** PRECAUTIONS:**

Contact your physician, athletic trainer, or physical therapist should excessive swelling or other complications occur.