

Heat Therapy

Patient Information

MSK Therapy



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Author ID:	MP / CM
Leaflet Ref:	Phy 050
Version:	8
Leaflet title:	Heat Therapy
Last review:	January 2023
Expiry Date:	January 2025



This guide is for use following assessment by your physiotherapist who will decide if it is a suitable treatment for you.

The term heat therapy includes the use of commercially available heat packs, lavender/wheat wraps and hot water bottles.

Benefits of using heat therapy

- Heat can help reduce pain and muscle spasm
- Heat can also be useful to relax muscles prior to exercise

Risks of using heat therapy

- Tissue damage due to burns
- Alteration in blood pressure
- Infection if skin is broken
- Increase in pain

Alternatives to heat therapy

None that is suitable for home use.

When should I not use heat therapy?

- If you develop broken skin in the area to be treated
- If you have an infection in the area to be treated
- If it increases your pain
- If you do not fully understand how to apply the treatment
- If you are unable to distinguish hot from cold on the area of application
- If you have an acute injury

How do I apply the treatment?

Commercially available heat packs: follow the manufacturer's instructions for heating and application.

Hot water bottle

- Fill from the hot tap rather than a kettle
- Wrap it in several layers of towels so that it is just warm to the touch

Both methods

- The heat pack/hot water bottle should be warm rather than hot to touch
- The normal application time is 10 to 15 minutes
- Do not use with any other treatment at the same time e.g. TENS machine
- Avoid the full weight of the limb on the heat pack as this may increase the likelihood of a burn.

After treatment

If you notice blistering or redness which does not go away, please contact your physiotherapist for advice (01257 256305). If it is outside normal working hours contact your GP or Accident and Emergency.

Comments, Compliments or Complaints

The Patient Relations/Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) Department provides confidential on the spot advice, information and support to patients, relatives, friends, and carers.

Contact Us

Tel: 01942 822376 (Monday to Friday 9am until 4pm)

The Patient Relations/PALS Manager
Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
Royal Albert Edward Infirmary
Wigan Lane
Wigan
WN1 2NN

Ask 3 Questions

Become more involved in decisions about your healthcare. You may be asked to make choices about your treatment. To begin with, try to make sure you get the answers to three key questions:

1. What are my options?
2. What are the positives and negatives of each option for me?
3. How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?



How We Use Your Information

For details on how we collect, use, and store the information we hold about you, please see patient information leaflet, Ref. **Corp 006** How we use your information, this can be found on the Patient Information Leaflets page on the Trust website, see details on the front cover.

This leaflet is also available in audio, large print, Braille, and other languages upon request. For more information, please ask in the department/ward.

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