

# Heat Therapy

## Patient Information

MSK Therapy

Author ID: MP / CM  
Leaflet Ref: Phy 050  
Version: 7  
Leaflet title: Heat Therapy  
Last review: April 2021  
Expiry Date: April 2023

**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.

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## 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 to 4pm)

The Patient Relations/PALS Manager  
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## 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 pros and cons of each option for me?
3. How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?



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## How We Use Your Information

For details on how we collect, use and store the information we hold about you, please take a look at our “how we use your information” leaflet which can be found on the Trust website: <https://www.wwl.nhs.uk>

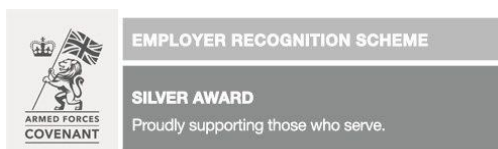
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This leaflet is also available in audio, large print, Braille and other languages upon request. For more information please ask in the department/ward.

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