

## HOW YOUR BODY HEALS

When suffering an acute injury (e.g. a strained muscle), your body uses inflammation to aid the healing process. Inflammation is a normal and essential part of the healing process as it brings various healing agents to the site of injury. However, this inflammation could be too great and may need to be moderated in order to maximise healing. The extent of the inflammatory response gives an indication of the severity of the injury and the length of time healing will take.

The healing process may be divided into 3 phases:

- 1) Inflammation
- 2) Repair
- 3) Remodelling

These phases are not mutually exclusive and overlap considerably.

The table below gives a general overview of each phase of the healing process.

Phase	Time ±	Symptoms	What happening	What should I do?
Inflammation	0-3 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Swollen</li> <li>• Painful</li> <li>• Decreased movement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bleeding occurs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PRICE regime</li> <li>• Avoid HARM</li> <li>• Refer to advice leaflet on acute injuries</li> </ul>
Repair	3-21 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decreasing swelling</li> <li>• Decreasing pain</li> <li>• Increasing movement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most of the scar material is laid down</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ROM exercises</li> <li>• Specific strengthening exercises</li> </ul>
Remodelling	21 days onwards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full range of movement</li> <li>• No swelling</li> <li>• Some residual discomfort with certain movement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tissue needs to be gradually challenged so that it continues to get stronger</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advanced strengthening exercises</li> <li>• Stretching exercises</li> <li>• Gradual return to sport</li> </ul>