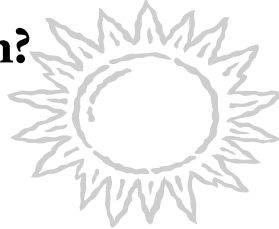


Pain Relief With Cold or Warm Compresses

Coping With Symptoms

**Which is better for pain?
A cold or hot press?**



As with many of the techniques for pain relief, use the one that brings the most relief. Heat often relieves sore muscles and cold often lessens pain sensations by numbing the affected area.

Comfortable and convenient applications of cold and hot compresses:

1. For a cold compress, try gel packs. They are the most comfortable. They remain soft and flexible even at freezing temperatures. Because they are reusable and stored in the freezer, they are very convenient. Gel packs are available at neighborhood drug stores and medical supply companies.

Another convenient cold compress is a bag of frozen vegetables (like peas). Simply apply the unopened bag to the area of pain. Frozen vegetable bags are inexpensive and can be reused. Just don't eat them! The vegetables are no longer good. Mark the bag as a "cold compress" and refreeze for later.

2. For a hot compress, try an electric heating pad wrapped in a towel. Heated gel packs, warm moist towel, hot baths or showers can also be used to apply heat. A hot bath is a great way to relax to practice relaxation techniques.

