Muscle Strains and Tears

CRYSTAL PALACE
PHYSIO GROUP
Making People Better

What causes Muscle strains or Tears?

• Muscles can be strained if over-stretched or over-worked.

• A strained muscle may feel tender to touch and it may be painful to use or stretch.

• Muscle strains are graded depending on the severity of the strain.

• Recovery from a muscle strain will depend on the severity of the injury and can vary between 2 weeks and three months

Anatomy

Muscles are made up of several bundles of thin fibres. These fibres can be damaged if excessive strain is placed on the muscle.

The body's immediate response to a muscle injury is to release inflammatory cells and chemicals in the area of damage. These cells and chemicals help to repair the damaged muscle. The muscle may appear hot and swollen during this stage.

What are the Classifications of muscle strains or tears?

• Grade 1 – mild strain, affecting less than 5% of muscle fibres.

• Grade 2 - moderate strain with a greater number of injured fibres.

• Grade 3 - this is a complete rupture of the muscle.

What should I do?

Follow the RICE principles in the first few days after the injury:

• R- Rest the injured muscle by avoiding using it for the first 48-72 hours.

• I- Ice. Using ice over the affected area for 10 minutes at a time can help to reduce pain and swelling.

• C- Compress the affected area using a support bandage around the muscle. Make sure the bandage is not too tight and ensure that you remove the bandage at night.

• E- Elevate the affected limb. This helps to reduce swelling in the area.

Simple painkillers can be used to help reduce pain and swelling. This should be discussed with your GP or pharmacist.

After the first few days you should begin to gently use the muscle and gradually try to get back to your normal activities.

How can we help?

• Teaching you specific strengthening exercises.

• Advising you on return to sport and activities.

• Using soft tissue massage or manual techniques to help mobilise the tissue.