

Medical Minute

HEAT OR ICE?



This is a question that many people have when they are hurting. “Do I put ice on it, or heat?” To make it simple, if there is swelling, ice; no swelling, heat. For example, if you have done too much at the gym (which I have heard rumors that it can happen, but I have no first-hand knowledge), and your muscles are sore and angry because you worked them too hard, then ice is your friend. But if you have a chronic joint condition like osteoarthritis, and you have pain with no swelling, then heat is best. Think of it as a warm hug for cranky joints.

Engaging in several activities, not just one, is helpful for preventing a decline in memory. So clearly, when I watch TV while talking on the phone and baking cookies (which translates into eating the dough first and baking *some* cookies), I’m doing my brain a favor. See? Productive. I tried taking a walk while reading a book once. Turns out multitasking has limits -- curbs were involved. Lesson learned.

One of the biggest (and very common) mistakes older adults make is wearing old, worn-down, and ill-fitting footwear! This includes those comfortable slippers you are still wearing that you got in 1997! Slick soles, slippery socks, or zero support footwear (like most of the flip flops we wear year-round in Florida), can easily lead to a fall. They don’t even recommend going barefoot all day but alternate going barefoot and wearing supportive shoes throughout the day. Looks like I need to go shoe shopping---what a shame. Like I need an excuse.