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concepts for employees

## Has the RICE Method Outlived Its Shelf Life?



If working out is a part of your regular schedule, you have likely run head on into an exercise injury. A twinge in your neck or a dull throbbing in your shin can hold you back from regular exercise for a while. You want to take prompt action to ease the pain and heal quickly so you can get back into the gym. Most instinctively use the RICE method to treat a minor injury, and for a good reason. The medical community has recommended this treatment for soft tissue injuries since it was created in the 1970s. Recent research has called the effectiveness

of this tried-and-true method into question, suggesting that the RICE method may slow down the recovery time of an injury. [Has the RICE method outlived its shelf life?](#)

To understand the critique, you must first understand the method. RICE is an acronym for an at-home treatment consisting of four distinct parts: rest, ice, compression, and elevation. The initial response to an injury seems intuitive – get off your feet and relax! The application of ice numbs the area and reduces pain. Next up? Wrap using an elastic bandage to keep swelling down. Finally, elevate the affected body part. Use pillows to keep the area at, or above, heart level to minimize swelling. The RICE method was used for years as a first line response to injuries with the caveat that a doctor should be seen if improvement is not seen within three days.

The RICE method has [come under recent scrutiny](#) because it may slow down the healing process. One of the goals of RICE is to keep swelling down and it approaches this with gusto. All four of the steps work to reroute blood away from the injury which is a bit of overkill. Modern medicine acknowledges that reducing blood flow is helpful, cutting off blood flow is not! A side effect of this overeager effort to diminish inflammation is a reduction in the number of immune cells that run to the site. This results in a lengthier healing time. RICE critics also oppose the strict rest regime. Instead, patients should engage in movement, paying attention to their body's cues. If it hurts, take it easy.



You don't have to be a healthcare professional to be familiar with the RICE acronym. It has been commonly used to treat minor injuries both in and out of the doctor's office. Only recently has it come under fire for impeding the healing process. New methods (the MEAT and METH, for example) have come on the scene adding things like tension and heat to the formula. This doesn't mean the RICE method is worthless; the individual steps have a time and place in the pain reduction and healing process. Pay attention to your symptoms and contact a medical professional if these acronyms cause your head to spin.

This newsletter contains general health and financial wellness information and is not a substitute for your doctor's care. You should consult an appropriate health care professional for your specific needs. Some treatments mentioned in this newsletter may not be covered by your health plan. Please refer to your benefit plan documents for information about coverage.

## Chicken Tamale Bake Makes 8 servings

*When you serve this Mexican-style casserole, everyone will clean their plate! Add fresh toppings like green onions, tomatoes, and avocado for even more flavor.*

**Prep Time:** 10 minutes

**Bake Time:** 25 minutes

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 large egg, lightly beaten
- 1 can (14-3/4 ounces) cream-style corn
- 1 package (8-1/2 ounces) cornbread/muffin mix
- 1 can (4 ounces) chopped green chiles
- 1/3 cup 2% milk
- 1/4 cup shredded Mexican cheese blend
- 2 cups coarsely shredded cooked chicken
- 1 can (10 ounces) enchilada sauce
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon onion powder
- 1-3/4 cups shredded Mexican cheese blend
- Optional: Chopped green onions, tomatoes, and avocado



### NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION

Calories: 364  
Fat: 17g  
Saturated Fat: 7g  
Protein: 21g  
Carbohydrates: 35g  
Sodium: 851mg  
Fiber: 4g

### DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 400°. In a large bowl, combine the first 6 ingredients; stir just until dry ingredients are moistened. Transfer to a greased 13x9-in. baking dish. Bake until light golden brown and a toothpick inserted in center comes out clean, 15-18 minutes.
2. In a large skillet, combine chicken, enchilada sauce, cumin, and onion powder; bring to a boil, stirring occasionally. Reduce heat; simmer, uncovered, 5 minutes. Spread over cornbread layer; sprinkle with cheese.
3. Bake until cheese is melted, 10-12 minutes longer. Let stand 10 minutes before serving. If desired, top with green onions, tomatoes, and avocado.