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# Use of heat at home

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## Heat

Heat can be used to relieve pain and can also help relieve stiffness.

Using heat first can help you to do your exercises more comfortably.

## Hot Packs

The following heat can be used at home;

- Hot water bottle
- Gel pack
- Wheatgerm pack
- Electric heat pad
- Hot shower or bath
- Scarf warmed over a radiator or similar heat source
- Bowl of warm water (for hands or feet)

## Precautions

- Do not use over an area of your body where you cannot feel the difference between hot and cold
- Do not have the heat source too hot – especially when using water. If you use a hot water bottle wrap it in a dry towel or cover.
- Do not use ointment at the same time – wash your skin before applying heat

- If you have any circulatory problems, eg Raynauds, ask your physiotherapist first.

## Method using a hot water bottle

- Fill the hot water bottle to half full or less with comfortably hot (not boiling) water
- Wrap in a dry towel or other cover
- Place on the area of your body to be treated. Make sure your body is well supported
- If the hot water bottle is too hot remove it

## Method using other heat packs

- Apply the hot pack over the area of your body to be treated. Make sure your body is well supported, for example if the heat is for your neck make sure your head and back are against the chair. You should feel comfortable
- Approximately 20 minutes is long enough to gain benefit from the heat
- You may use the heat as often as you wish through the day. It is safer not to go to sleep at night with a heat pack in place, especially if you are using an electric pad.