

Using a heat pad safely



Heat pads are a great tool for heat therapy. Available to purchase at chemists and some supermarkets, a heat pad can help relieve aches, pains, cramps, and muscle stiffness by improving blood flow.

Heat pads are generally low risk. However, there are a few things to consider before using one:

Precautions

The temperature of your heat pad should be comfortably warm. Stop using the heat pad if you feel it's too hot.

Heat therapy may not be suitable for these health conditions:

- Acute inflammation or recent injury
- [High blood pressure](#)
- Dermatitis
- Deep vein thrombosis
- Peripheral vascular disease
- Open wounds
- Loss of skin sensation
- Severe loss of cognitive function



Safety

You should always read the safety guide provided with your heat pad before use.

Here are some basic safety tips:

- Don't place a heat pad directly on your skin. Use a barrier, such as a towel between your skin and the heat pad to avoid burns.
- Don't fall asleep when using a heat pad.
- When using an electric heat pad, start on the lowest heat level.
- Don't use a heat pad that has a cracked or broken electrical cord.
- Don't apply a heat pad to damaged skin.

Frequently asked questions

How does a heat pad help with sore muscles?

Muscle soreness can be caused by injury or high-intensity activity. In these cases, applying heat can increase blood flow and promote recovery. Heat can also help to relax tight muscles and relieve pain.

Is it ok to fall asleep with a heat pad?

Always avoid falling asleep while using a heat pad. This could result in burns or further injury.

How long should I apply the heat pad for?

It should stay on for approximately 10–30 minutes to be effective. If it isn't on long enough, the muscle may not have an opportunity to warm up. Using it for too long can result in injury from burns and could increase inflammation in the body.

LiveUp is a healthy ageing initiative funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care.

For more information, call 1800 951 971 or email us at support@liveup.org.au