



## What is A Wheatbag?

A Wheatbag is a soothing pad, made from natural grains and relaxing herbs which can help to ease away Rheumatic pains, stomach cramps, tension headaches, stiff necks plus many more.

It is microwaveable in order to become a relaxing warm pack, or it can be placed in the freezer to make an effective ice pack - very useful for sporting sprains and strains.

Physiotherapists frequently advise people to use a hot water bottle or an ice pack. The problem is how do you know when you should use heat and when you should use cold applications?

Quite simply, the nature of the problem causing pain or discomfort will indicate which of the two treatments you require.

If you have sprained your ankle, for example, and it has swollen up, an ice pack can help to reduce the swelling. The blood vessels will constrict and force blood out of the area – providing relief from pain. Therefore use cold application for areas that have suffered recent trauma and become hot and swollen.

Heat is more appropriate where the tissues are hard and contracted. Heat will allow dilatation of blood vessels and produce an increased blood flow. This will help to soften and relax the soft tissues.

In the case of arthritic pain, there are many waste products in the tissues surrounding the involved joint. Increasing the blood supply to the area helps to wash away the waste products, provide relief from arthritic pain and help to increase the mobility in a stiff joint.

Heat can be applied for an hour or more at a time, but we recommend cold applications for 10 – 20 minutes maximum.

At the Wye Physiotherapy Practice we often provide wheat bags for our patients. They are very simple to use: for a warm pack, simply microwave on full power for 3 minutes – it will retain its heat for up to 1 hour.

It can also be heated in a conventional oven if wrapped up carefully in foil. To make a cold pack, simply place in a sealed plastic bag in the freezer for at least 6 hours.