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Superficial Heat

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Superficial heat can be applied in the form of hot packs, moist warm towels, heating pads, water bottles, and infrared lamps. Heat is applied to help raise the temperature of soft tissues directly below the surface of the skin. The application of heat to the surface of the skin improves blood flow to the underlying region. Heat stimulates the dilation of blood vessels in the skin and below the surface of the skin. It helps relax tissues and can be used to help temporarily reduce pain. The application of heat may be used with other forms of therapy such as chiropractic treatment, spinal manipulation, therapeutic exercise, or other treatments. The use of heat is usually recommended to help relax tissues, which are in spasm and to provide temporary relief of the symptoms associated with chronic pain and muscle tightness. In summary, the use of heat helps to calm tissues, to increase flexibility, improve range of motion, and to promote increased circulation to help speed the healing process.