



MANAGEMENT OF MUSCLE CRAMPS

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I GET A MUSCLE CRAMP?

- Do **NOT forcefully** move the body part which is experiencing the cramp back to a neutral position, as this could cause **injury** and even cause muscle or tendon tear
- Instead, gently use a **pulsing motion** of the body part in the opposite direction of the cramp until it is finished, and let the muscle rest before resuming activity

BE AWARE THAT

- Muscle cramps can be dangerous if they occur in a situation where you could be harmed, such as when on a ladder, driving or swimming

LIFESTYLE MODIFICATIONS FOR PREVENTION OF MUSCLE CRAMPS

- Extreme dehydration or exercise induced cramps
- **Stretching**, particularly stretching before activities or before bed could be helpful for prevention of muscle cramps





NON-PRESCRIPTION REMEDIES FOR MUSCLE CRAMPS

- Always consult your physician to ensure safety of any remedy
- **B-complex vitamins** (strongest evidence even if normal levels)
- **Magnesium Supplements**
 - **Oral magnesium** if helpful if cramps are pregnancy related or if magnesium deficient, little evidence outside these settings but could help some patients
 - **Epsom salts** are magnesium salts, could help to soak affected limbs
- **Vitamin-D** supplementation (if deficient)
- Ensuring adequate **hydration** including salt repletion in the setting of excessive sweating or exercise Some patients have benefited from certain homeopathic medications including **Brewer's Yeast**
- **Tonic water** contains small amounts of quinine and some patients find that small amounts of this (1-2 glasses / day) is helpful. High in sugar (diet best)

PRESCRIPTION TREATMENTS FOR MUSCLE CRAMPS

- **NOTE: Quinine Sulphate** has an FDA black box warning against use in muscle cramps. Consult your physician to review the potentially serious and fatal complications. **Mexiletetine** could be considered as an alternative.
- Other considerations include **muscle relaxants** such as baclofen (watch for dependence) and **antiepileptics** (phenytoin, carbamazepine, levetiracetam – particularly in cramp fasciculation syndrome)
- Note that pain medications including gabapentin, NSAIDs and opioids do not have good evidence for efficacy for muscle cramps
- Always consult your physician to discuss any potential prescription medication for muscle cramps