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Game Ready System Helps Joint Injuries

Linda Russell

A twisted ankle or injured knee not only causes pain; it makes doing your normal activities much harder or sometimes impossible. A new piece of equipment at Saint Francis Health Center is helping joint injury patients get back in the game faster.

Tommy Thompson is in therapy to recover from a knee injury and partial knee replacement. "I slipped and fell on the left side of my body and messed up my knee pretty bad," he says.

Physical Therapist Jeff Smalley is using the Game Ready System to try and get Tommy's knee back to normal. "Traditionally things we've used for swelling include ultrasound, electric stimulation, heat, cold, exercise, and education," says Smalley. The Game Ready system combines two of those things- cold and intermittent compression in a controlled environment.

"Compression; we've used ace wraps and slip on supports, but a better method is intermittent compression, because it's more like the muscles pumping fluid out of that area," says Smalley. The cold helps the injured tissues to survive better in the low oxygen environment created by the injury. "To have a device that combines both is not only beneficial that way, but it saves time," Smalley says.

It shortens recovery time, which is very important to the Washburn University athletes Michael Ramirez treats. "Obviously, those athletes are wanting to return to normal activity a lot quicker than the normal person," he says. Ramirez commonly uses Game Ready for football and basketball injuries, and likes the portability of the machine. "We can take it on the road if we need to; athletes can take it with them at camps or on a weekend tournament," Ramirez explains.

And athlete or not, getting back in the game faster is always better.

Saint Francis Health Center is currently using the new Game Ready system on knees, ankles, shoulders and elbows.

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