

STATIC ELECTRICITY FOR SPRAINS.

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In the discussion of sprains hitherto, directions have been given for four methods of treatment, following each other or combined, according to the judgment of the surgeon. These methods are rest, the application of cold, massage, and passive followed by active movements. Of all external applications my own experience favors the copious inunction of very hot lard, or lard oil, used every frequently. The use of electrical massage is, however, so far superior to all other forms of treatment that we may safely discard their consideration except as adjuvants to the electricity.

A sprain is usually a laceration of capsular or lateral ligaments, with or without ruptured tendons, torn muscles, contusion or laceration of the synovial membrane. We know now, thoroughly, that repair of the injured tissues occurs as the result of internal rather than external forces. We use external applications for the purpose of stimulating the circulation, thus bringing an extra amount of blood to the parts and hastening its departure after it has accomplished its laudable object. Rest is also a useful ally, although we can now accomplish good results with less absolute rest than was formerly considered necessary. Electrical massage with the static roller meets all the indications for the successful treatment of these injuries more perfectly than all other means combined.

In proof of this statement, very brief notes of two cases are here given, selected almost at random from a large number of similar histories in my private practice. The use of electricity in sprains had never occurred to me until an experience of more than fifteen years with hot and cold applications, bandaging and rest had fully demonstrated the inutility of these methods.

Case I.—A policeman, weighing two hundred and fifty pounds, started to run toward a house from which cries of "murder" were coming. He stepped on something which turned his ankle, but his impetus was so great that he was obliged to run twenty or thirty steps before he could stop. With the greatest difficulty, supported by a cane, he came to