

RUNNING INJURIES:

IT Band Friction Syndrome

(Pain on the outside of knee at the IT Band insertion)

WHAT IS IT?

The iliotibial band is a band of strong connective tissue which runs from the pelvic bone (ilium) down the outside of the thigh to the top of the shin bone (tibia). Iliotibial (IT) band friction syndrome is a condition which describes the rubbing of this band of tissue as it passes over a bony bump on the outside of the knee joint.

HOW DOES IT HAPPEN?

IT band friction syndrome is an overuse injury. When the knee is bent and straightened the iliotibial band slides over a bony bump on the outside of the knee. When this is performed repeatedly or when the band is excessively tight, wear and tear of the band can develop as it flicks over the bony bump. To heal this damage, the body commences an inflammatory response. This can cause pain at the site of injury.

HOW DOES IT FEEL?

IT band friction syndrome results in pain felt on the outside of the knee. This pain is often aggravated by activities which involve repeated bending and straightening of the knee, such as running. It typically develops gradually. Initially, the pain may begin as a dull ache down the side of the knee which appears near the end of a session and disappears when you stop. However, if you continue to exercise and cause further rubbing of the IT band, the pain may progress to become more intense and appear earlier in a session. It may also take longer to disappear when you stop exercising.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

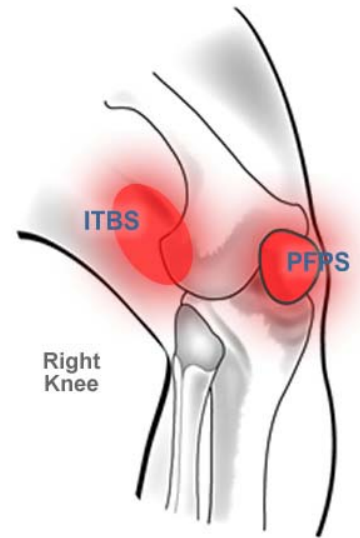
IT band friction syndrome generally does not get better on its own if the cause is not addressed and you continue to exercise. If you have or suspect you have IT band friction syndrome you should consult your nearest physiotherapist. In the meantime you can begin initial treatment. This should consist of icing following exercise. Icing should consist of crushed ice wrapped in a moist towel applied for 15-20 minutes over the outside of the knee or ice in a paper cup massaged up and down the outside of the knee until the skin is numb every 1-2 hours.

WHAT SHOULDN'T YOU DO?

If you have or suspect you have IT band friction syndrome, you shouldn't ignore the problem. This may lead to your problem getting worse such that your pain becomes more severe and is felt more frequently.

ARE THERE ANY LONG TERM EFFECTS?

IT band friction syndrome does not produce any long term effects as long as it is properly diagnosed and appropriately treated. Recovery usually takes a

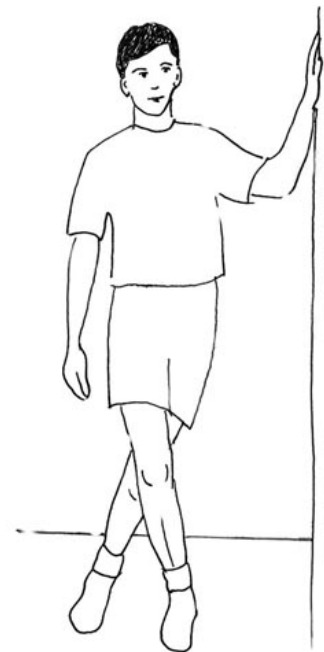
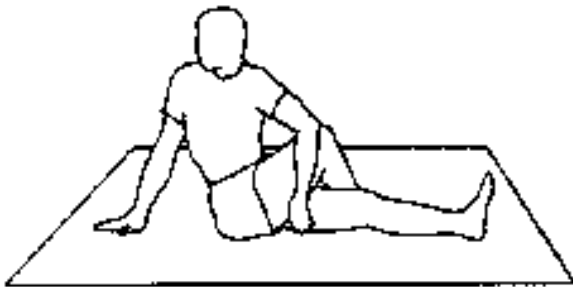


number of weeks. During this period you can often keep exercising, depending on the severity of your pain. In a small number of cases recovery may be prolonged. In these cases, surgery may be required to stop the IT band from rubbing and to relieve pain. This is only performed after conservative or non-surgical treatment has failed to give relief.

TALK TO A PHYSIOTHERAPIST

The assistance of a physiotherapist is important in the treatment of IT band friction syndrome. Initially, they can assist in diagnosing the problem and establishing the severity of the condition. From this, they will be able to determine an appropriate treatment plan. This may involve initial activity modification, soft tissue treatment such as massage and stretching, specific strengthening exercises to stop rubbing of the IT band. Your physiotherapist may suggest talking with your doctor about the use of anti-inflammatory medications. Other treatments may include the use of ice or heat and electrotherapeutic modalities like interferential or ultrasound. A physiotherapist will also be able to assess and determine why you developed IT band friction syndrome and address this during your recovery to prevent reoccurrence when you return to exercise and sport.

Physiotherapists are regulated primary healthcare professionals who help people of all ages and lifestyles gain and maintain their desired level of active living and physical mobility. With their applied knowledge and understanding of the human body in action, physiotherapists are able to help you to increase your mobility, relieve pain, build strength and improve balance and cardiovascular function. Physiotherapists not only treat injuries, they also teach you how to prevent the onset of pain or injury that can limit your activity.



To book your appointment today, please call:



Fernie Physiotherapy: 250-423-3423

Elkford Physiotherapy: 250-865-7111

