

RUNNING INJURIES:

Medial Tibial Stress Syndrome

(pain in the front of the shins; also known as “shin splints”)

WHAT IS IT?

Commonly referred to as ‘shin splints’; medial tibial stress syndrome refers to inflammation occurring where a tendon or muscle attaches to a bone.

HOW DOES IT HAPPEN?

Medial tibial stress syndrome results from overuse. Tendons and muscles attach to bone via a layer of connecting tissue overlying the bone. This tissue is called the periosteum. When muscles contract they pull on their tendons which in turn pull on the periosteum overlying the bone. With overuse, poor biomechanics or excessive muscle tightness this pulling can damage the periosteum. This results in an inflammatory response as the body attempts to repair the damage. Consequently, medial tibial stress syndrome is inflammation where a tendon attaches to the periosteum.



HOW DOES IT FEEL?

Medial tibial stress syndrome is typically felt as pain along the inside border of the shin bone (tibia). It is usually painful as you begin exercising however as the area begins to warm up the pain may subside. Following exercise your pain may gradually return as inflammation takes place. The area of tenderness may be painful to touch and you may feel thickened areas or bands of tissue adjacent to the tibia.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

Medial tibial stress syndrome generally does not settle on its own if the cause is not addressed and you continue to exercise. If you have or suspect you have medial tibial stress syndrome you should consult your nearest physiotherapist. In the meantime you can begin initial treatment. This should consist of icing following exercise and massage to the inside border of the shin bone followed by ice to reduce any post massage soreness. Icing may consist of crushed ice wrapped in a moist towel applied for 15-20 minutes or ice in a paper cup massaged up and down the inside of the shin until the skin is numb.

WHAT SHOULDN'T YOU DO?

If you have shin soreness, you shouldn't ignore the problem. Your pain may get better as you exercise however the exercise you are doing may be causing further damage. This can lead to your injury getting worse such that your pain does not ‘warm up’ and you feel it throughout an entire exercise session.



COULD THERE BE ANY LONG TERM EFFECTS?

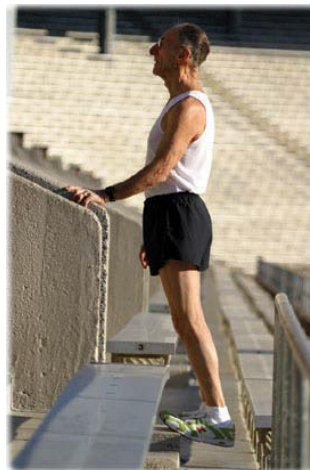
Medial tibial stress syndrome does not produce any long term effects as long as it is properly diagnosed and appropriately treated. The condition can recur unless causative factors are not addressed and could possibly lead to a compartment syndrome.

TALK TO A PHYSIOTHERAPIST

The assistance of a physiotherapist is important in the treatment of medial tibial stress syndrome. Initially, they can assist in diagnosing the problem and establishing the severity of the condition. From this, your physiotherapist will be able to determine an appropriate treatment plan. This may involve initial activity modification, soft tissue treatment such as massage and stretching and/or correction of your biomechanics using orthoses. 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 medial tibial stress 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.

**HOLD each stretch
for 30 SECONDS**



To book your appointment today, please call:



Fernie Physiotherapy: 250-423-3423

Elkford Physiotherapy: 250-865-7111

