



shin splints (mtss)

Shin splints is a generic term for many lower leg complaints, the issue is commonly medial tibial stress syndrome (mtss). MTSS is a painful condition that develops along the inside of the shin. The usual location is along the lower half of the tibia, anywhere from a few centimetres above the ankle to almost two thirds of the way up the shin.

MTSS commonly affects runners and dancers. During the early stages of MTSS, a person will describe pain that is present when training first begins, but disappears as exercise continues. The pain will often return after exercise or the following morning. As the injury progresses the person will experience more time with the pain, and the risk of stress fracture increases.



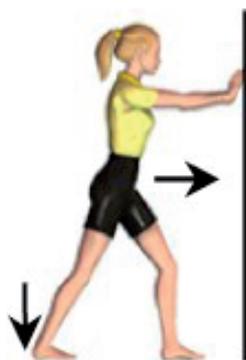
treatment and cause of mtss

Active rest is the most effective form of recovery, accompanied by myotherapy or physiotherapy. Active rest refers to stopping the activity that causes the pain (running, dancing etc), and using alternative training methods such as swimming or cycling.

Treatment from a myotherapist would involve a biomechanical assessment to determine the cause of injury, soft tissue massage to the affected area, stretching and corrective exercise prescription. Depending on how quickly the problem is addressed, recovery may take 6 wks.

MTSS is commonly caused by overtraining (too much too soon), poor equipment (old running shoes) and hard or unstable surfaces.

what you can do



calf stretch



foot scrunch for arch

Consulting a myotherapist and completing the steps listed below will decrease the time you spend in pain from mtss.

1. Rest - no running for at least 4 weeks. Substitute runs with deep water running, swimming or cycling. You can begin running again at low intensity and for gradually increasing distance once the pain has gone.
2. ICE - Ice the painful area at the end of the day and after exercise. Ice will reduce swelling and decrease pain.
3. Stretch - Concentrate on stretching the lower leg - calf and soleus by pushing against a wall (left). Keeping the back leg straight (slight bend) will stretch the calf, a bent leg will stretch the soleus. Keep your back heel on the ground.
4. Inspect your shoes - mtss is commonly caused by poor footwear. Shoes that have covered over 500km of running are due for replacement - even if they still look fine.
5. Strengthen your arches - Rolling the foot in or flattening of the arch is another common problem associated with mtss. Try scrunching a towel up with your arch (x 6), not your toes (left).