

Shin Splints

What is Shin Splints

Shin splints is the general name given to pain at the front of the lower leg. Shin splints is not a diagnosis in itself but a description of symptoms of which there could be a number of causes. The most common cause is inflammation of the periosteum of the tibia (sheath surrounding the bone).

Symptoms of Shin Splints

- Tenderness over the inside of the shin.
- Lower leg pain which goes after a period of rest but comes back when running starts again.
- Sometimes some swelling.
- Lumps and bumps may be felt when feeling the inside of the shin bone.
- Pain when the toes or foot are bent downwards. A redness over the inside of the shin.

Causes

- Rapidly increasing your training levels (for example your running distance, speed or number of times you run in a week)
- Sport or activity involves running or jumping on a hard surface (such as dancing or aerobics)
- Trainers are worn down and have lost their cushioning and support
- Feet rolling inwards (pronating)
- Weaknesses in the muscles that attach onto the bone

Treatment

Treatment for shin splints is as simple as reducing pain and inflammation, identifying training and biomechanical problems which may have helped cause the injury initially, restoring muscles to their original condition and gradually returning to training.

- Rest, Ice/Cold treatment,
- Stretching (especially the tibialis anterior (muscle at the front of the shin))
- Wear Shock absorbing heels,
- Maintain fitness through non-weight bearing activities,
- Visit a physiotherapist or sports doctor for more treatment

Prevention

- Wear footwear that is appropriate for your sport or activity and make sure that they provide enough support and cushioning.
- Wear shoe inserts if your doctor or podiatrist advises you to.
- Follow the correct technique for your sport. Don't suddenly change your training regime.
- Eat a diet rich in vitamins and minerals, and make sure you eat enough calcium-rich foods such as dairy products.