

SHIN SPLINTS

- WHAT IS IT?

Shin splints is a term broadly used to describe pain in the leg along the tibia bone brought on by exercise or athletic activity. Shin splints are caused by continued inflammation of the lining of the bone as a result of overuse from repetitive activity, which leads to breakdown of tissues.

- SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF THIS CONDITION

- Pain along the shin (lower leg), above the ankle. The pain is along the bone and not the muscle.
- Pain that initially occurs after exercise, progressing to pain in the beginning of exercise that lessens after a short warm-up period.
- With continued exercise and left untreated, constant pain that eventually causes the athlete to stop high impact exercise and sports participation.
- Tenderness felt when pressing along the inner/front portion of the leg (shin bone).



- CAUSES

- Overuse from repetitive high impact activity (hiking, running, jumping, etc.).
- Improper shoes for running.
- Prolonged running on very hard surfaces.
- Flat feet
- Weakness and tightness of calf muscles.

- WHAT CAN I DO TO PREVENT SHIN SPLINTS?

- Train properly. Increase mileage no more than 10% a week. Training frequency should be no more than 4 days a week. You must allow for adequate recovery time.
- Replace running shoes every 500 miles.
- Warm up and stretch well before running.
- Run on surfaces that absorb shock (ie. treadmill, running track).

- TREATMENT

- Rest- NO running or prolonged walking/hiking (Biking or swimming are good alternate forms of aerobic fitness training).
- Ice over the shins 15-20 minutes 1-2 times a day.
- Calf stretching/Lower extremity stretching
- Change to a new pair of running shoes if indicated.
- SLOWLY progress back to running. If symptoms return, you have resumed running, jumping, or prolonged walking too early. You should consult a physician for further treatment.

