



Shin Splints – Risk Factors and Prevention

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The term "shin splints" is a general term that gets used a lot in the running community. Shin Splints include the diagnosis of medial tibial stress syndrome (muscle problem), compartment syndrome (increase in pressure problem) and stress fracture (bone problem). There is no one cause to shin splints which makes preventing it hard. However, there are some common risk factors and prevention tips.

Risk Factors:

- Over training
- Foot pronation (fallen arches or "flat feet")
- Muscle and flexibility imbalances
- Abrupt increase in distance, speed or frequency (training error)
- Hard or inclined surfaces
- Inadequate footwear or hard heels
- Inadequate hydration and calcium intake
- Poor running form

Preventive tips:

- Listen to your body when it says "pain"
- REST (take some time off)!!!!
- ICE IT (2-3 times a day for 10-20 min)!
- Massage out the tenderness!
- Arch supports
- Stretch your calves and strengthen your lower legs (squats, lunges, resisted toe raises)
- Gradual running program and cross train 1-2 days per week:
- Increase distance by 10% each week and long distance by 50% per week
- Limit your concrete running (asphalt is softer and trail dirt/grass even softer)
- Purchase new shoes every 300-600 miles and try cushion socks.
- Go to a running store and have a qualified person match your foot type with the appropriate shoe style
- The body is made up of 75% water which lubricates bones, muscles, tendons and ligaments so drink your water! Proper intake of calcium reinforces stronger bones and efficient muscle contractions
- Head up and keep muscles relaxed!

If symptoms persist after 2-3weeks of, seek out medical advice from your primary Physician or Physical Therapist.

HAPPY TRAILS!!!