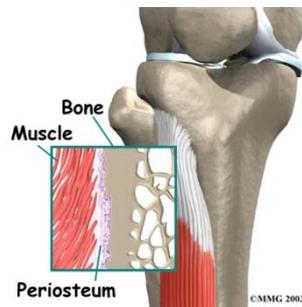


Shin Splints

Medial tibial stress syndrome or 'shin splints' as most people know it as is one of the most common cause of shin pain, particularly found in runners or athletes who play sports requiring high amounts of running.

The exact cause of shin splints is unknown; however the most accepted theory is that of a repetitive traction injury. Muscles in the shin, namely the tibialis posterior exert a traction force on the periosteum of the tibia (outer lining of the bone) creating pain and inflammation along the length of the shin.



What are the symptoms?

- Pain usually felt along the inside and front of the shin.
- Pain is often worst at the beginning of a training session, easing slightly as you warm up, however returning post workout.
- In severe cases pain can be so debilitating exercise is not possible.
- Small bumps can be felt along the edges of the tibia.
- Tenderness to the touch.

Predisposing factors?

Shin splints are an 'overuse' injury, and like most of these injuries there are usually some biomechanical or training factors that need to be addressed; These commonly include:

- Inappropriate footwear

- Excessive pronation (flat feet) or supination (high arches)
- Poor pelvic stability
- Tight calf muscles
- Training methods: inappropriate increases in intensity, duration or frequency.
- Training on unforgiving hard surfaces

Treatment:

Shin splints usually heal well with appropriate management; however recovery can range from weeks to months depending on the severity. Physiotherapy can be a vital tool at assisting you with your recovery. Treatment methods include:

- Soft tissue massage to tight muscles
- Electrophysical therapy to aid with reduction in inflammation
- Dry needling
- Activity modification advice
- Footwear / orthotic advice
- Taping
- Exercise prescription to target tight and/or weak muscles.

If your suffering from shin pain, don't adopt a 'no pain no gain' attitude as there is the risk that you can turn shin splints into a stress fracture (which will sideline you for months)

If any of this sounds familiar and you would like to make an appointment, please contact us on **(02) 9328 3822**. Physiotherapists, Ross Messiter and Emma Esslemont specialise in the treatment of sports and musculoskeletal injuries.

