

Dr. Shockley's Health Tips

ILIOTIBIAL BAND (ITB) SYNDROME

Definition:

Pain & inflammation of the outside portion of the knee, where the iliotibial band attaches to the knee. Friction occurs between the ITB & the femur (long bone of thigh), which can result in producing inflammation & pain.

Symptoms:

Initially, a dull ache 1-2 kilometers into a run, with pain remaining for the duration of the run. The pain disappears soon after you stop running. Later on, severe, sharp pain which prevents running occurs. Pain is typically worse running downhill or on cambered surfaces. It may be present when walking up or downstairs. There is local tenderness & inflammation on the outer portion of the knee.

Causes:

Tight & weak gluteals (the muscles of your bottom). Overtraining with high amounts of hill training (especially downhill) or training on hard surfaces along with cambered surfaces. Overpronation (where the foot rolls in too much), poor shock absorption of shoes or worn shoes. Bicycle seat set too high, improper adjusted bike pedals. Leg length asymmetry.

Self-Treatment:

Mild pain, modify workout routine by reducing training load & intensity & avoid running downhill or on cambered surfaces. Severe pain, stop running all together. Start taking a natural anti-inflammatory supplement (i.e. Bromelain, MSM, etc). Apply ice to the knee until skin is numb (approximately 20 minutes) & then take a 60 minute break before repeating. This helps to reduce the inflammation. Self-massage, using arnica, biofreeze or an anti-inflammatory gel, to the muscle & the band (along the outside of the thigh only, not down the side of the knee where you feel the pain as this will only aggravate the problem). Stretching the ITB: Stand with the right leg crossed in the back of the left leg. Extend the left arm against a wall/pole/chair/other stable object. Lean your weight against the object while pushing your right hip in the opposite direction. Keep your right foot anchored while allowing your left knee to flex. You should feel the stretch in the ITB muscle in the right hip and along the outside of the right thigh. Hold for 30 sec. Relax slowly. Repeat to opposite side. Repeat stretch 2-3 times per day. Return to running gradually. Full recovery is usually between 3-6 weeks. Get proper fitting shoes (go to running store & have the gait analysis done).

Medical Treatment:

If your injury doesn't respond within 2 weeks, go see a sports certified chiropractor (CCSP or DACBSP), MAT (Muscle Activation Techniques) therapist or physiotherapist. Then upon his/her recommendation, see

a physiotherapist or orthopedic surgeon. These doctors have access to several modalities to aid the healing process & further evaluate the severity of the condition.

Alternative Exercises:

Swimming, pool running, cycling (in low gear) “spinning”. Avoid any exercise that places straining onto the ITB, in particular, avoid stair-climbing.

Preventative Measures:

Strengthen the hip adductors/abductors (inner thigh & out thigh respectively), hamstrings, quadriceps & calf muscles. Appropriate shoes, have them fitted for you (involves gait analysis).

References:

Vizniak, N. & Carnes, M. Quick Reference Clinical Chiropractic Conditions Manual. Canada: DC Publishing International; 2004: 137-188.