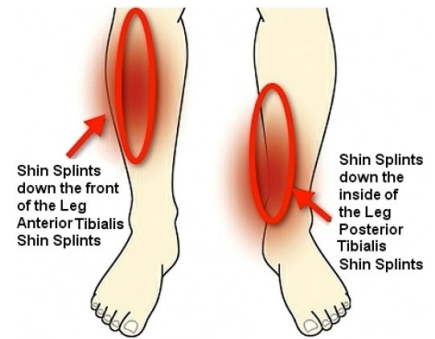


At Body Works Sports Physiotherapy, we have recently been seeing more **Shin Splints** pain in runners training for the Sun run and upcoming marathon season. Do you have shin splints?

What are Shin Splints?

The term “shin splints” is used to describe two similar conditions effecting the larger of the two bones of the lower leg.

Overuse of lower leg musculature result in irritation and micro tearing of the site where the muscle connects to the bone (periosteum), and generally causes an aching pain that is worst in the initial phases of a run, eases off and then returns after activity. In more advanced cases, the pain may persist at rest, or throughout the duration of a run. In the long term, continued irritation of the periosteum can lead to a stress reaction or stress fracture in the bone, requiring immobilization and prolonged healing time.



Can I run through Shin Splints?

In short the answer is no, and trying to do so may end in increased pain and a stress fracture of the lower leg. To understand why, and more details, one needs to look a little closer.

What causes Shin Splints?

Shin splints from a combination of:

1. **Overtraining**
2. **Improper running technique**
3. **Suboptimal biomechanics of the lower extremity**
4. **Inappropriate footwear or support for foot type**

- **Anterior shin splints** are often caused by over striding, excessive heel strike, tight calves and running downhill.
- **Posterior shin splints** are often influenced by over pronation, restricted dorsiflexion and weakness of the foot musculature, as well as stiffness in the ankle joint.

One of the key components of any treatment program for shin splints is rest. The body needs a chance to break the cycle of irritation and inflammation. Other treatments modalities can help, such as:

- Orthotics or off the shelf insoles
- **Physiotherapy treatment** including a Home exercise program to help release tight muscles and improve strength and foot/ankle control
- Core strength and hip/pelvic girdle strength and stability to enable better mechanics

The individual contributions and specific causes for shin splints vary by person, and the best way to determine what is happening in your case and improve upon it is a thorough investigation and assessment by a physiotherapist. Then you can determine what you need to do to get stronger and to alleviate poor mechanics which will prevent recurrence of the injury. After this, you should be able to do a graduated return to running without the return of nagging shin splint pain. Also, your running form, overall endurance and power may have improved through addressing your specific weaknesses and potential muscle imbalances.

Come in to Body Works Sports Physiotherapy for an assessment to help you move better and feel better!