

Shin Splints:

If you've even gone for a run or even a brisk walk and felt like your lower leg muscles were on fire you were likely experiencing shin splints. Shin splints are the common term for pain along the shin bone caused by micro-tearing in the muscle and connective tissue that attach muscle to bone. The location of the shin splints depends on the muscle that is affected.

Symptoms:

- pain or burning along the tibial crest, can be medial (tibialis posterior) or lateral (tibialis anterior) depending on which muscle is affected
- commonly occurs in runners but also dancers and those in other impact or jumping sports
- heat, swelling and tenderness are sometimes present

What causes it?

- overpronation and poor biomechanics are common causes of medial splints
- muscle weakness in the lower legs, hips and core can cause compensation and increased demands on the tibialis posterior or anterior muscles
- either type of shin splints can lead to tibial stress fracture due to tearing of the periosteum (connective tissue attaching the muscle to the bone)

Treatment:

- rest, ice, anti-inflammatories
- custom orthotics can greatly relieve shin splint pain by correcting biomechanical issues
- address footwear, shoes could be overly worn or not supportive enough
- evaluate running surface; including banking of roads or sidewalks, firmness of concrete or asphalt, and excessive incline
- try a compression sleeve or sock, this will aid in keeping the muscle warm and also prevent it from pulling excessively at the bone
- physiotherapy, massage, foam rolling and stretching are all beneficial in the recovery process

