

Shin Splints

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Definition

Shin Splints are often a catch-all diagnosis for lower leg pain that occurs below the knee either on the front outside part of the leg (anterior shin splints) or the inside back of the leg (posterior-medial shin splints). It represents pain originating at the point where the calf muscles are attached to the shin bone (tibia). This pain frequently results from tendonitis, the inflammation of the muscles where they attach to the bone.

Posterior Medial Shin Splints

Abnormal biomechanics can be a cause of posterior medial shin splints. The most common biomechanical factor that causes foot, leg, and hip injuries is excessive pronation through exaggerated twisting of the lower leg, tugging on the muscular attachment to the tibia, resulting in inflammation. Other causes include inadequate stretching, worn shoes, or excessive stress placed on one leg or one hip from running on banked roads or always in the same direction on the road. Pain associated with posterior medial shin splints becomes more severe when you rise up on your toes or turn your foot out.

Anterior shin splints

Pain that occurs on the front outside part of the leg. These are usually the result from an imbalance between the large calf muscles and the muscle in the front of your leg. In general the muscles in the front are working hard to overcome the power of the muscles in the back.

Restriction in the movement of the joint of the first toe can cause increased demand on the anterior leg muscles during the toe off phase.

Treatment

- **Rest** Resting does not have to be absolute unless there is pain with walking and normal daily activities.
- **Cryotherapy** (ice) 10-15 minutes
- **Gradual, progressive stretching.** To stretch and strengthen the tendons and the muscles in the front of the leg. Sit on a table and loop and ankle weight around your ankle. Move your foot up and down without bending your knee.
- Consider swimming, running in the pool, or cycling in a low gear.
- **Chiropractic** manipulations to address the misalignment and muscle imbalance
- **Myofascial Release** (best in the form of ART) to address muscle imbalance
- **Orthotic devices** to correct overpronation.

For more information on this article and to schedule free lower extremity and shoe evaluation call Dr. Mazgaloff at **(415) 546-1461** or on the web at www.chirohealthsf.com.

Next Month: Pelvic Torsion (Short Leg Syndrome)