Shin Pain

What is Shin Splints?

Shin splints are characterised by pain in the front or side of the lower leg

The most common types of shin injuries include:

Medial tibial stress syndrome MTSS is an overuse injury which causes pain on the inner aspect of the shins. Pain usually runs along the length of the shin and may be present in one or both legs.

Tibial stress fracture Pain is usually more point-specific and located directly over the bone in the shin. Pain is usually relieved when not bearing weight.

Anterior tibialis tendonitis Pain is located along the outer border of the lower leg bone, where the anterior tibialis muscle is located. Repetitive motion and increased strain on the muscle can cause inflammation in the tendon.

What causes it?

- Faulty biomechanics while running/jumping
- Anatomical abnormalities, e.g., flattened or high arches or position of knees
- Muscle weakness
- Decreased flexibility, especially in the calf muscles
- Low bone mineral density
- Hormonal imbalances
- Type of surface on which activity is performed
- Quality and condition of footwear
- Training techniques

122 Remuera Road | Remuera | info@performpodiatry.co.nz | (09) 523 2333

Prevention and Treatment

Because the lower leg bone is chronically inflamed due to repetitive forces, running further aggravates shin splint symptoms and prevents the affected site from healing properly. Shin splint prevention and treatment strategies:

- Decrease the intensity and duration of activity
- Resting 7-10 days is recommended; try biking or swimming to continue cardio exercise
- Ice (20 min with bag OR 5 min with ice cup massage over area) and elevate often during the day
- Orthotics and new shoes may be helpful to alter where stress is placed on the feet and up the legs
- Running mechanics may need to be altered if inconsistencies are noted
- Stretching and strengthening may help decrease pain and improve function

Practitioner's Notes: ……

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