

Iliotibial Band Syndrome (A.k.a. IT band syndrome or “Runner’s Knee”)

What is ITBS?

Pain and inflammation on the outside of the knee, where the iliotibial band (a muscle on the outside of the thigh) becomes tendinous, and results in a friction syndrome by rubbing against the femur (thigh bone) as it runs alongside the knee joint.



What are the signs & symptoms?

Tenderness and pain around the outside of the knee with activity. It usually starts out as a dull ache a few minutes into a run, with pain remaining for the duration of the run. The pain disappears soon after stopping running, later, severe sharp pain which prevents running pain is worse on running downhill, or on cambered surfaces pain may be present when walking up or downstairs.

What can cause ITBS this?

- sudden increase in activity
- overpronation of the feet (flat foot)
- incorrect or worn shoes
- excessive hill running (especially downhill)
- running on cambered surfaces
- overtraining
- bow legged

Treatment:

- rest is your #1 defense to get better – you have to give the band time to allow the inflammation to go down. Try to take a week off and instead take up an activity like swimming or upper body strength training.
- Ice – you need to decrease the inflammation around the knee joint in order to decrease your pain
- Physical therapy – get a referral to a physical therapist (go to www.ItsYourMove.com to find a skilled therapist close to you)
- Stretch, stretch, stretch – you need to stretch those muscles from your hip to your knee that are on the lateral (outside) aspect of your hip & thigh.
- NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs) – can be used as long as you are not allergic or sensitive to aspirin or other NSAID medications. Ask your doctor for advice on this.

Preventative Measures:

- after you have rested & your pain has subsided, gradually add activity back
- stretch before and after your workouts
- correct shoes and/or orthotics if necessary (your physical therapist can look at your feet & shoes to see if this is needed)

- gradually add hills & uneven surfaces back into your training (little by little)
- add rest periods into your training regimen as well to prevent overtraining & ITBS

STRETCHES:

IT Band Standing Stretch

Cross right leg over the other, then lean to same side until stretch is felt on other hip. Hold 20 seconds.

Repeat 4 times per set.
Do 1-2 sets per session.



IT Band Seated Stretch

Cross right leg over other thigh and place elbow over outside of knee. Gently stretch hip, buttock & IT Band muscles by pushing bent knee across body. Hold 20 seconds.

Repeat 4 times per set. Do 1-2 sets per session.



Standing Hamstring Stretch

Place right foot on stool. Slowly lean forward, keeping back straight, until stretch is felt in back of thigh. Hold 20 seconds.

Repeat 4 times per set. Do 1-2 sets per session.



Glute Stretch – Supine

Cross legs, right on top. Gently pull other knee toward chest until stretch is felt in buttock/hip of top leg. Hold 20 seconds.

Repeat 4 times per set. Do 1-2 sets per session.



Lying Cross Body Stretch

Pull right knee toward opposite shoulder. Hold 20 seconds. Relax.

Repeat 4 times per set. Do 1-2 sets per session.

