

Shin Splints (Medial Tibial Stress Syndrome)

“Shin splints” is a common injury in sports persons, in particular or people that walk long distances daily.

The cause of shin splints is due to many factors that may change the foot position or load parts of the lower leg when walking.

Some cause are related to walking pattern; people that walk with the foot rolling in (pronation) excessively, there is an increase in the loading to the outer leg.



Other causes of Shin splints include muscle imbalance, in particular tight calves that reduce the movement in the ankle, or muscle weakness in foot muscles that result in over pronation; poor ankle stability from previous injury may make a person prone to shin splints.

Other conditions of the back or hips are also known to cause shin splints.

Symptoms: Generally pain in the shin, that is worse with loading by running or jumping. The

pain can initially be relieved by stretching. There may also be localized swelling or bruising, but not always.

Generally any resistance to the muscles of the lower leg will increase the pain intensity.

Treatment

Physiotherapy involves identifying factors that may be contributing to the development of shin splints.

Depending on the findings, treatment may involve a combination of stretching and strengthening exercises. For excessive muscle tightness techniques may also include massage, foam rollers, needling and other manual mobilization techniques.

The **Gait scan** tool is a very effective means to identify problematic foot posture and orthotics may be sufficient to correct this.

In cases where there has been little improvement with physiotherapy treatment and rest, an X- Rays or Bone scans may be requested to identify any other underlying problems.

