

Runners Knee

The iliotibial band (ITB) is a connective tissue that runs down the outside of the thigh, it acts to stabilise the hip and knee during the stance phase of running. Iliotibial band friction syndrome also called 'runners knee' is highly common in elite and recreational distance runners alike. Those particularly susceptible are endurance runners who are building up their mileage.

As the official ASICS Greater Manchester Marathon Physiotherapists we see a lot of this condition in the build up to the race and have loads of experience dealing with it successfully. Pain will be felt on the outside of the thigh typical of the outside of the knee and in the early stages will increase as the condition progresses. The other group of runners who suffer this injury are fell runners who aggravate the problem whilst descending.

The causes of all of the above are usually related to training but more often than not biomechanical typically reduced control of the hip by the gluteal muscles.

Our physiotherapists should diagnose the condition and will treat the cause of the problem using primarily deep tissue massage to the ITB and self-massage using a foam roller is often recommended. Exercises are very important to strengthen the hip muscles to improve core stability particularly in the gluteal muscles. Stretches to release any tightness in the ITB and hip muscles may also be given.

Acupuncture is very effective in helping release muscle tension and reducing inflammation on the outside of the knee. We will often use kinesio-tape to keep the ITB positioned correctly and mobile. The problem will settle with a gradual return to training accompanied by a hip core stability exercise programme.

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