

Shin splints and calf injuries

Shin splints is a term that covers a number of conditions. These can include;

- Medial tibial stress syndrome which commonly affects the muscles of the lower leg where they attach on the inner shin.
- Compartment syndrome which commonly affects the muscles of the lower leg and occurs when the muscle expands as a result of training and becomes compressed by its surrounding sheath.
- Stress fractures occur when a bone cannot withstand the training load placed upon it. These can occur in the lower back, thigh, shin or foot.

Calf injuries are among the most common running injuries we see. They often occur suddenly, resulting in the runner having to limp home after. Calf injuries can often re-occur in the same side or on the opposite leg. Your physiotherapist will assess you fully to identify the causes whether biomechanical/ technique, footwear related or training related.

The causes of all the above will be related to training, footwear and biomechanics.

Our physiotherapists will diagnose the condition and if necessary refer you for further investigations e.g. x-ray or scan if a stress fracture is suspected. If treatment is indicated they will treat the cause of the injury using massage skills to release the tight or injured structures around your lower leg that contribute to this injury. Deep tissue massage is highly effective to achieve this. Physiotherapists will teach you specific exercises to stretch and strengthen the lower leg muscles. We will use specific exercise drills to re-educate and enhance your foot and ankle function. We have also found that kinesio-taping is useful to support the foot and ankle function and facilitating activity in weakened muscles. Often with calf injuries we have found it necessary to strengthen it with a strength and conditioning programme.

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