



Iliotibial Band Syndrome (ITSB)

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Symptoms

Iliotibial Band Syndrome (ITBS) is a common overuse injury that is seen most commonly among long distance runners and cyclists. ITBS presents as a diffuse pain over the outside (lateral) portion of the knee. If ITBS progresses, the pain may become more intense, sharp, and localized. People experiencing ITBS often note that the pain is made worse while running down hill, lengthening their stride, or sitting for long periods of time with their knee in a flexed position.

Etiology

The Iliotibial band (IT band) is a thick of fibrous tissue that originates on the side the hip and runs down the lateral side of the thigh, crosses over the lateral portion of the knee, and inserts just below the knee joint. ITBS develops from the repetitive flexion and extension of the knee that causes the IT band to become irritated at the point where it crosses over the femoral condyle of the lateral knee. Inflammation occurs in the area of this irritation, causing pain.

Factors That May Lead To ITBS

Increasing running mileage too quickly, having an inadequate warm-up or cool-down, running excessive down hill, or running on a banked surface may leave a person more susceptible to develop ITBS. Those who overpronate, have leg length discrepancies, or are bow-legged are also more prone to experience ITBS.

Treatment

Treatment of ITBS typically involves activity modification, massage, and stretching and strengthening of the affected limb. Runners should back off the amount of running they have been doing. During this time using an elliptical or swimming may be appropriate. The use of ice and anti-inflammatory medications will help to alleviate inflammation. In cases where pain persists, consulting with a physical therapist or athletic trainer for a more comprehensive approach to treatment is recommended.

