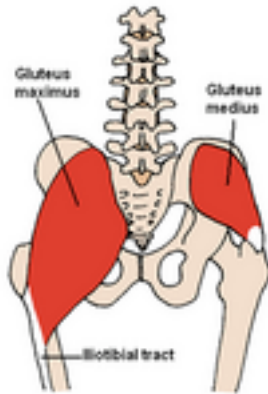


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Iliotibial Band Syndrome



Definition

ITBS (iliotibial band syndrome) is one of the leading causes of lateral knee pain in runners. The iliotibial band is a superficial thickening of tissue on the outside of the thigh, extending from the outside of the pelvis, over the hip and knee, and inserting just below the knee. The band is crucial to stabilizing the knee during running, moving from behind the femur to the front while walking. The continual rubbing of the band over the lateral femoral epicondyle, combined with the repeated flexion and extension of the knee during running may cause the area to become inflamed.

Symptoms

ITBS symptoms range from a stinging sensation just above the knee joint (on the outside of the knee or along the entire length of the iliotibial band) to swelling or thickening of the tissue at the point where the band moves over the femur. The pain may not occur immediately during activity, but may intensify over time, especially as the foot strikes the ground. Pain might persist after activity. Pain may also be present below the knee, where the ITB actually attaches to the tibia. ITBS can also occur where the IT band connects to the hip, though this is less likely as a sports injury. It commonly occurs during pregnancy, as the connective tissues loosen and the woman gains weight -- each process adding more pressure. ITBS at the hip also commonly affects the elderly. ITBS at the hip is studied

less; few treatments are generally known.

Causes

ITBS can result from one or more of the following training habits, anatomical abnormalities, or muscular imbalances:

Training habits:

- Always Running on a banked surface (such as the shoulder of a road or an indoor track) bends the downhill leg slightly inward and causes extreme stretching of the band against the femur
- Inadequate warm-up or cool-down
- Excessive up-hill and downhill running
- In cycling, having the feet "toed-in" to an excessive angle
- Running up and down stairs
- Hiking long distances
- Rowing

While pain can be acute to quite painful, the iliotibial band can be rested, iced, compressed and elevated (RICE Rest, Ice, Compression and Elevation) to reduce pain and inflammation, followed by stretching. Massage therapy may also be beneficial by removing the scar tissue. Using a foam roller (can be found in all soundRUNNER locations) to loosen the iliotibial band can help prevent and treat pain although the treatment itself can be very painful to some. Also, an ultra sound machine can be used around the area to relax it, followed by a machine that utilizes electrode stimulation to the area to further relax it. This can result in more comfort and/or a wider range of motion. Consulting with a doctor or referring to a registered physiotherapist or athletic therapist would be the best solutions. Performance running shoes and/or custom foot orthotics can effectively treat this condition by controlling the amount of pronation in the foot and thus reducing rotation of the leg and knee (which creates friction of the Iliotibial Band against the outside of the knee). In severe cases where a conservative approach has failed, surgery can be a good option.