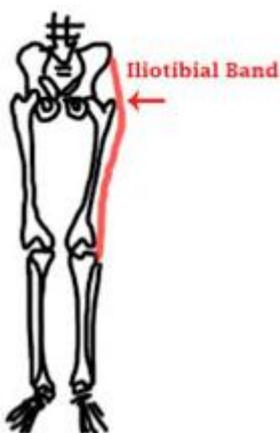


## ILLIOTIBIAL BAND SYNDROME IN RUNNERS



The cause of any running injury can be the biomechanics of the body, wrong footwear, muscle weakness or an over-working muscle, to name a few. Just as with back pain, there are factors in everyday life that affect the body's alignment. Which side we tend to carry our handbag on, what sort of work we do, playing an instrument or another sport where one hand, foot, leg works in a different way to the other, will affect all the little muscles of the body. This can have consequences for its structure and alignment, hence the way we walk, move and run.



When one muscle works harder, it becomes stronger, causing another muscle to weaken. The amazing body will use any muscles it can to compensate for weak muscles causing pain. The more repetitive movements we do, the more imprinted the difference and the greater the pain. It is important not to ignore these pains, as these are the body's way of notifying us something is not right.

Specialists like physiotherapists, osteopaths or massage therapists can help you to fix the problem, but it's good to make sure you get to the cause of it. For example if your diagnosis is a weak right glut and the pain disappears following the prescribed strengthening exercises, but reappears a month later, it'll be worth investigating your body and physical habits. What is it that makes your right glut tighten up? It could be your arch collapsing, pulling the knee in that pulls the thigh and hip, which affects your glut. Try to identify the root of the problem, ask yourself 'why' and then you can make the changes. Why is the arch collapsing? Why is the knee rotating inwards? Why is the hamstring weaker?



### What Is Iliotibial Band Syndrome?

The IT band is located on the outside of the thigh connecting the outside of the hip, thigh and the knee. When the knee flexes, the IT band pulls backward on the side of the knee and when the knee extends, the IT band moves forward. A fluid sac separates the IT band from the knee, its role being to decrease the friction between the two. Repetitive flexion and extension of the knee causes inflammation of the sac and the IT band, or the side of the knee.

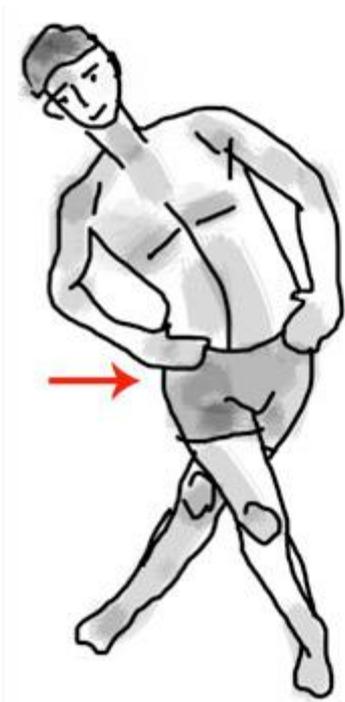
### How To Treat Iliotibial Band Syndrome?



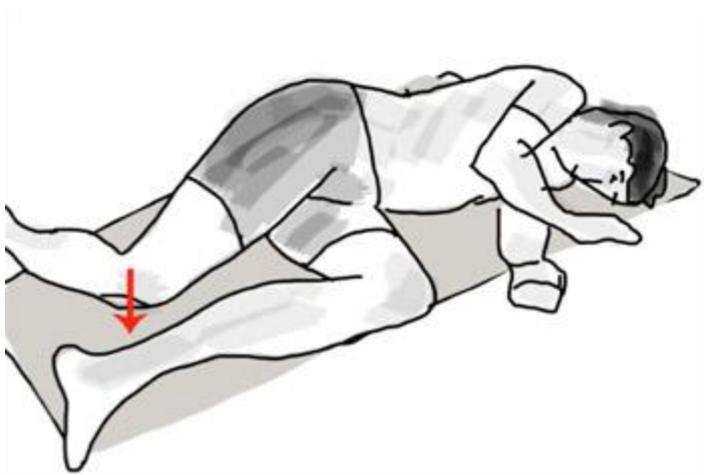
**To start with, rest and ice it to reduce the inflammation.** A sports massage or self-massage using our favorite foam roller, [The Grid](#), will loosen up the band. Place the foam roller under your hip flexor and using your arms slowly move your body backwards and forwards letting the foam roller to massage your hips. Then placing the roller under the ITB lift your lower leg and again, using your arms roll back and forth. If it feels comfortable you can lift both legs to do this exercise.

You can also try taping the muscles with [Rocktape](#) to take the pressure of the IT band. To make sure you do this correctly discuss it with your physiotherapist.

### Stretches for Iliotibial Band Syndrome



1. Cross one leg behind to be stretched behind the other leg as far it comfortably goes. Holding your back straight push your hips to the side of your stretched leg until you feel the stretch in your hip and outer thigh. You should hold the stretch at least for 20 seconds.



2. To stretch your IT band further, lie down on your side with hips and knees flexed 90 degrees towards your upper body, then draw the top leg behind and let it drop to the floor. You can apply some pressure by placing the bottom foot over the top knee.

### Summary

Incorporating strengthening and stretching exercises into your life will prevent you from injuries and improve your running and everyday life. I'd recommend Pilates and Yoga. Don't get discouraged or disappointed if you don't enjoy the first class you try. Visit others and find the teacher who will work for you. An aligned body means better breathing, more effective use of body and more joyous running.

**If the pain persists, visit a physiotherapist.**