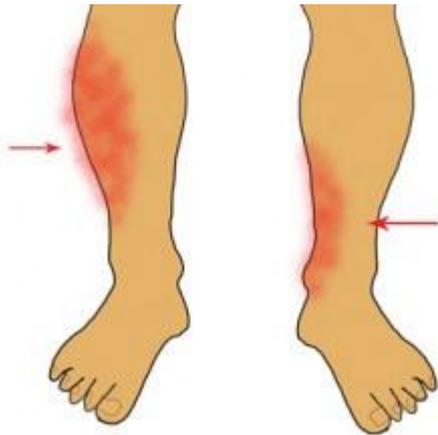


## **SHIN SPLINTS AND RUNNING**



### **What Causes Shin Splints in Runners?**

Shin splints can come from a wide variety of causes. The definition of shin splints is pain or tenderness running up the inside, and sometimes the outside of the shin, from the ankle to the knee. Often the pain comes from a tightness in the calf, which then pulls round to the front of the shin. They can vary in intensity, from slight discomfort to agonising pain every time you put weight onto your foot. Once shin splints hit, they can play havoc with your training schedule, but don't get disheartened. There are ways to prevent and abolish them for good.

### **Preventing Shin Splints While Running**

#### **1. Make sure you are wearing the correct footwear**

Sometimes shin splints can come from a lack of anti-pronation support. This is because the arches drop, which in turn puts undue stress on the calf muscle and therefore the shin tendons. Equally, an over-supportive shoe can push the foot over, and result in a similar pain. Once a shoe is fitted to the foot, they work in harmony together.

#### **2. Mix up the terrain that you run on**

When running on harder ground, the impact is higher, therefore you could find it beneficial to add some off-road running into your programme. This will be softer under foot, and less likely to cause problems with your calves.

#### **3. Stretch your calf muscles religiously, even on rest days**

Stretching is a key part of any running programme. In order to run our best, we need to do the maintenance work. It is best to stretch after exercise, when the muscles have warmed up. On the days when you are not running, still take 10 minutes in the evening to stretch out your calves and quads. This will make your next training session easier, and will help with 'tired leg' syndrome.

### **Treating Shin Splints for Runners**



### 1. Stretch, stretch, stretch!

Running through the pain is not going to help. Really, at this point you need to stop training and start stretching. It may sound tedious, but it works. The best stretch (given by fantastic Physio, [Simon Murphy](#)) for not only the calf muscles, but also the hamstrings and glutes, is as shown above.

- Lie on the floor with your bottom as close to the wall as is comfortable.
- Rest your heels on the wall, hip distance apart, with straight legs (being careful not to rotate the knees outwards). Flex your feet (pushing toes towards the ground) for 30 seconds, then release for 30 seconds.

Repeat this 10 minutes in the morning and 10 minutes in the evening. For variety, work your legs out into a 'V' shape and then return to hip distance apart.

### 2. Ice the shin

Put an ice pack onto the shin for 5 minutes. This will get the blood rushing to the inflamed area, and you will recover faster. It's best not to put ice directly on to the skin. You can either put crushed ice in a bag and cover it with a towel, or get a re-usable hot/cold pack. We usually stock at least one kind in our [Accessories Extras](#) section.

### 3. Go for a massage

Shiatsu massage is particularly good, as it targets the pressure points and releases the acute tightness, so that the blood can flow more easily again. You will walk away from the therapist a new person! If you're based in London, [Jeanette McDonnell](#) is great.

### 4. Invest in The Grid or The Stick

These tools are invaluable in both treatment and prevention. You can alter the amount of pressure on the muscles by leaning more or less body weight onto the area. It is a perfect compliment to stretching as it gets

deeper and really gets the blood pumping. Not too comfortable, but productive! These are both available in our [Accessories Extras](#) section.

### How long before I can get back to training?

Unfortunately, it's impossible to say for sure. It depends on how acute the shin splints are. If you are able to stretch, ice or have a massage, then unless it is a severe case, you should be back training within a couple of weeks. Most importantly, **don't give up!** If you need more help, then make an appointment with one of our recommended physiotherapists. They are all wonderful, and are there to get you back on your feet as soon as possible.