



ILIOTIBIAL BAND FRICTION SYNDROME

WHAT IS THE ILIOTIBIAL BAND?

The iliotibial band (ITB) is a band on fascial connective tissue that runs down the outside of the upper leg and attaches into the tibia (shin bone), the femoral epicondyle (outside of the thigh bone) and into the patella (knee cap). The gluteus maximus (buttocks) and tensor fascia latae (muscle at the front of the hip) attach into the ITB proximally and when these muscles excessively pull on the ITB, injuries and irritations can occur.

WHAT IS ITBFS?

ITBFS occurs as a result of friction or increased pressure of the ITB at the femoral epicondyle of the thigh that often occurs in running sports due to increased repetition on bending and straightening.

INJURY FACTS:

This increased tension at the femoral epicondyle occurs close to foot strike during running between 20 and 30 degrees knee bend. The bending and straightening will increase tension to the outside femur leading to friction. Initially it may take days-weeks for symptoms to develop.



DIAGNOSIS:

A thorough subjective examination will look at the current history of the condition including aggravating and easing factors, training loads, changes in equipment e.g. shoes, changes to running/walking conditions e.g. more hills and more.

The physiotherapist will test for the following:

- Pain on the outside of the knee
- Tightness through the hip muscles
- Hip, knee or ankle joint stiffness
- Observe for biomechanical inefficiencies during running, walking and sporting which may include foot pronation and altered pelvic tilting
- Weakness through the hip

Some special orthopaedic tests will also be completed to help with diagnosis.



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SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS:

A person suffering from ITBFS may show the following:

- Aching to the outside of the knee that is worse when running
- Pain at the same stage of a run e.g. 4 km's in
- Worsening pain when running excessive hills particularly during to decline component
- Swelling to the outside of the knee
- The feeling or sensation like something is rubbing, often associated with a click or pop during knee flexion/extension
- Pain and/or tightness around the hip



PHYSIOTHERAPY TREATMENT OPTIONS:

- Cryotherapy
- Deep tissue massage
- Dry Needling
- Kinesio Taping
- GaitScan assessments
- Strengthening programs
- Footwear analysis
- Electrotherapy
- Active release techniques
- Stretching
- Fascial scrapping
- Biomechanical analysis
- Education
- Electrotherapy
- Cross training programs
- Joint mobility techniques

FURTHER TREATMENT OPTIONS:

If the above conservative treatment techniques are not successful corticosteroid injection into the bursa on the outside of the knee can alleviate symptoms. Surgery may also be required to release the ITB and sometimes remove the bursa on the outside of the knee.