



Shin Splints

This condition is brought about when a muscle in the lower leg pulls away from its bony insertion on the tibia (one of the bones of the lower leg). Shin splints may be caused by overuse of the muscles, such as when starting a running program or other physical activities, especially without prior proper conditioning. As well, movements such as excessive pronation and supination (movement of the ankle in or out) can contribute.

Treatment will initially focus on decreasing the inflammation and irritation using modalities such as ice and ultrasound and by decreasing activity. Aggravating factors such as training technique, footwear and body mechanics will be addressed. Proper strengthening and stretching exercises will be an important part of therapy.

The therapeutic modalities commonly used include:

Ultrasound: uses sound waves and may be used to decrease scar tissue, increase blood flow, or decrease pain.

Interferential Current: uses electrical current to decrease pain, can also be used to elicit muscle contraction and decrease swelling.

Acupuncture: uses small, solid needles to encourage healing, reduce pain, and improve function of affected areas of the body.

What can you do at home?

Rest: by decreasing your activity you allow your body a chance to heal itself. When you start to feel better it is important to ease back into activities which might be aggravating. Listen to your body - pain means that you have done too much.

Ice: ice decreases the metabolism of your cells so that they do not die despite a decrease in oxygen to the injured area. Ice should be kept on for approximately 15 minutes, several times a day. The injured area should be elevated (above the level of your heart) at the same time. Use a wet towel between the ice and your skin to protect against frostbite. You can use frozen veggies, cold packs, or real ice.

