

What to look for

Shin splints are characterised by pain occasionally swelling anywhere in the lower leg.

Usually any pain in the lower leg is referred to as shin splints. It is to do with the muscles that enable the foot to move. Injuries that result in damage to the fibres of these muscles bring on shin splints.

Causes

Any sudden or repetitive stress to the lower leg can bring on the complaint. Any person who is active and uses their legs a great deal are susceptible - athletes, dancers, aerobic enthusiasts, bike riders etc.

Joggers who persist in running on hard surfaces such as bitumen or concrete will no doubt suffer from this problem. Poorly cushioned shoes and poor posture can contribute as well.

Traditional Treatment

Most treatments focus on rest, followed by a program of exercises to stop it from happening again. Get treatment straight away to avoid complications.

Crutches are occasionally used to keep weight off the injured leg, and pain killers to reduce inflammation and pain.

Personal Care

Rest your legs. Apply ice. Wrap your leg in an elastic bandage to compress the tissues. And elevate your legs to reduce blood pressure.

Prevention

Always wear properly cushioned and supported footwear if you plan to jog or play sports and avoid hard surfaces. Warm up your muscles by doing stretching exercises before exercising.

When to seek further professional advice

- you have any of the symptoms listed above and they persist.
- you feel localised on the lower leg.