



United States Military Academy
Sports Medicine-Physical Therapy Services
Keller Army Community Hospital and Arvin Gym, West Point, New York
"Academic, Research, and Clinical Excellence"

Iliotibial Band Syndrome

The Iliotibial band is a thick piece of connective tissue that runs down the outside of the leg. Iliotibial band syndrome (ITBS) is an overuse injury related to excessive friction between the I-T Band and bony prominences at the knee during physical activity.

Symptoms

The primary symptom is pain on the outside of the knee associated with activity that tends to be relieved with rest. Repeated bending of the knee with activities such as running, climbing stairs, and occasionally biking may aggravate pain.

Causes

ITBS is a overuse injury that may be exacerbated by the following:

1. I-T Band tightness
2. Hip muscle tightness and weakness
3. Training Errors such as running too many miles on improper surfaces
4. Poor footwear that is not appropriate for your foot type
5. Biomechanical faults of the knee
6. Biomechanical faults of the feet

Treatment

1. Relative Rest: If possible, avoid activities that aggravate your symptoms
2. Control Inflammation:
 - a. Ice Massage - Perform 2-3 times per day. Freeze water in Styrofoam or paper cup, peel away cup and apply directly to the outside of your knee. Keep ice cup moving at all times. Apply Ice Massage for 7-10 minutes.
 - b. Medication - non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medication may be prescribed.
3. Stretch Tight Muscles: Your Physical Therapist will evaluate your flexibility and recommend appropriate exercises to improve your flexibility
4. Strengthen Weak Muscles: Your Physical Therapist will evaluate your strength and muscle balance and recommend appropriate exercises to improve your strength if necessary
5. Perform alternative aerobic training to maintain fitness and conditioning (i.e., elliptical glider, swimming)
6. Other physical therapy modalities may be utilized if necessary

- **Based off of the findings of your exam your physical therapist will help you develop a well-balanced treatment plan that meets your specific needs.**

