

Iliotibial Band Syndrome

Iliotibial Band Syndrome (ITBS) is a common injury for runners, bikers, and long distance walkers. The iliotibial band is actually a long tendon. (Tendons connect muscles to bone.) The ITB runs down the side of the thigh and connects to the outside edge of the tibia just below the middle of the knee joint. The iliotibial bands main function is to stabilize the knee as it flexes and extends. Therefore, when the ITB is not stabilizing properly there tends to be excessive rubbing on the outside of the knee causing inflammation. A few common reasons that this occurs can be do to running hills or stairs, overtraining, poor warm up or cool down, over pronation or excessive supination, a leg length discrepancy, genu varum deformity (bowlegged) or muscle imbalances such as weak hip abductors.

The painful symptoms typically begin over the outside of the knee and as the inflammation increases, the pain may radiate up the side of the thigh and down the side of side of the leg.

Most cases of ITBS can be treated with fairly simple measures in physical therapy. In addition to strengthening the weakened muscles and stretching the ITB, a key element of treatment is examining your overall training schedule. The physical therapists at Lakeshore Physical Therapy can help make recommendations to achieve a safe running distance, select appropriate footwear, modify running surfaces, and achieve a proper conditioning program to prevent reinjury.