

Training Tip #13

Lateral Knee Pain: Iliotibial Band Syndrome

“I have a burning pain on the outside of my knee.”

“I hear a snapping sound on the outside of my knee.”

“I have pain on the lateral aspect of my knee every time I walk over 2 miles.”

If you have these symptoms you may have **Iliotibial Band Syndrome**. The iliotibial band is a layer of connective tissue. It begins at a muscle near the outer side of your hip, travels down the outer side of your thigh, crosses the outer side of the knee and attaches to the outer side of your upper shin bone (tibia).

How does it occur?

ITB syndrome occurs when this band repeatedly rubs over the bump of the thigh bone (femur) near the knee causing the band to be irritated. This condition can result from:

1. Having a tight iliotibial band.
2. Having tight muscles in your hip, pelvis or leg.
3. Your legs not being the same length.
4. Walking on sloped surfaces.
5. Walking in shoes with a lot of wear on the outside of the heel.

How is it treated?

Treatment includes the following:

1. Walking and cycling and other exacerbating activity should be avoided.
2. Apply an ice pack over the lateral knee for 15-20 minutes 3 times a day for 3 days or ice massage your knee. Freeze water in a paper cup. Peel the top of the cup away to expose the ice and hold the bottom of the cup while you rub the ice over your knee for 5 to 10 minutes.
3. Take an anti-inflammatory medication, such as ibuprofen (do not take more than the recommended dose) for 3-7 days.
4. Once the acute pain phase has decreased, start stretching exercises (see below). Stretches should be performed holding each position for 15 seconds, coming up to the starting position and repeating three times. If your symptoms do not improve, seek medical advice.