



SHIN PAIN, "SHIN SPLINTS" AND CALF PAIN

There are many possible causes of pain in the shin region and Calf area. "Shin Splints" is a non-medical generic term given to pain in this region usually due to compartment syndrome.

What to do

- There are many possible causes of pain in this region. You should see your Osteopath to have a proper examination and diagnosis of the pain.
- Because there are many possible causes of pain in this region, incorrect diagnosis and management could make your condition worse.
- You may require further investigations or scans to diagnose the problem properly.
- If indicated your Osteopath may apply treatment to tissues that are associated with the problem.
- Your Osteopath will give you instructions on how to safely care for the injury and how to do rehabilitation exercises or stretches through to complete recovery and help to prevent re-occurrence
- our Osteopath may suggest changes to your current training, sport or things that may be contributing or causing the problem
- You should take measures to reduce inflammation as advised such as ice or anti-inflammatories, which should only be taken under direction and supervision of a healthcare professional.
- BEWARE! – don't ignore pain in the calf region. Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT) is a serious condition that can have a very similar presentation to a simple "calf strain" and should always be investigated by a health care professional. Massage to this condition can be dangerous.

What are the different causes of shin pain?

Stress fracture of the tibia

- Caused by excessive repetitive forces through the tibia (shin bone)
- Gradual onset of shin pain aggravated by exercise, pain can also occur at rest and at night.

- Localised tenderness on the tibia (shin bone)
- May be abnormal foot biomechanics
- MRI should show the stress fracture (or bone scan)
- Treatment
 - Initial period of rest (sometimes non-weight bearing) of about 4 -8 weeks until pain subsides
 - Gradual progression back to activity ie water running
 - Your Osteopath will help to identify predisposing factors and modify

Inflammatory shin pain

- Pain along the inside border of the tibia, that usually decreases with warming up exercises. You can usually complete exercise but the pain returns after and is worse the following day
- Treatment
 - Rest initially and take measures to reduce inflammation
 - Assessment of the mechanics of the foot
 - Osteopathic treatment to the muscles in the compartments of the lower leg to release tension and increase flexibility.
 - Your Osteopath will help to identify predisposing factors and modify

Compartment syndromes

- These may be due to overuse, inflammatory process and tightness in the connective tissue that surrounds compartments of muscles (the fascia)
- When the patient attempts to exercise blood travels to the muscles - they are restricted

from expanding due to fascial tightness and vascular wastes can not drain away causing pain

- 2 Common types
 - Deep posterior compartment syndrome (at the back inner side near the calf)
 - Anterior compartments syndrome (at the front near the shin bone)
- Pain often described as a bursting sensation that increases with exercise
- There may be other associated symptoms such as weakness, pins & needles which may indicate nerve compression
- Treatment usually involves treating tension in the muscles and tissues involved. Your Osteopath will help to identify predisposing factors and modify.
- Severe and chronic cases often require referral.

Muscle Strains of the leg

- Gastrocs and soleus muscle strains will often present as pain in the calf region
- Strains of the muscles along the front of the shin are associated with bringing your toes and foot up towards the head.
- Usually associated with increased activity, different activities different or wrong footwear
- Treatment includes reduce pain and inflammation and treatment of the soft tissues and stretching. Your Osteopath will also help you identify and address the cause of the strain.