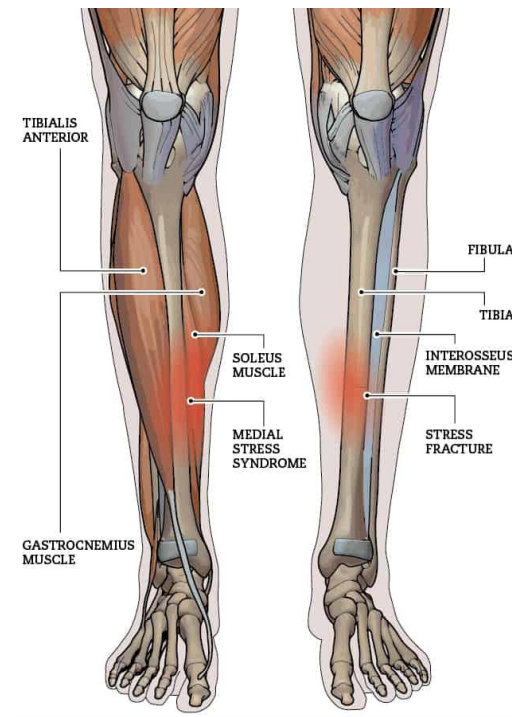




## Hilliard Bradley High School/Memorial Middle School Sports Medicine

### What are shin splints?

Shin splints, or medial tibial stress syndrome (MTSS), is a common injury in athletes. “Shin splints” refers to pain along the inner edge of the shin bone (tibia). This pain can be caused by several different things, but most commonly is it inflammation of the muscles in the shin and the tissue that surrounds the tibia, called the periosteum. This tissue is very sensitive, so when it becomes irritated it can be very painful.



### What causes shin splints?

Shin splints is an overuse injury. It is most common in runners and in sports that require a lot of running.

Your tibia carries the weight of your entire body, and repetitive movements such as running stress the bone and the surrounding muscles over time. Most cases of shin splints are caused by overuse, poor footwear, and increasing the frequency and intensity of exercise too much too soon. Some people’s mechanics, which is how their body moves when they run, may also predispose them to developing shin pain. Your athletic trainers and coaches can help you make sure your running mechanics are good.

## What should I do if I think I have shin splints?

Go see your athletic trainers. They can give you more information on your injury and can help you heal quickly.

Shin splints are commonly treated initially with rest, ice, and exercises. Ice will help the inflammation in the muscles and periosteum slow down. You will probably also perform corrective exercises or “rehab”. These exercises help to make sure your legs are strong enough to support you well while you are running. It will also decrease your pain.

Medications such as ibuprofen or acetaminophen (Tylenol) will also help the inflammation decrease, but ask your parent/guardian before use.

Your athletic trainers may also use other treatments to help you heal. It is important to ask questions about the treatments if you are confused or want to know more.

## How long will I have to sit out from my sport?

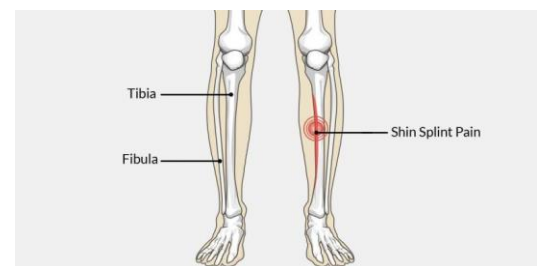
Each person is different. Some cases of shin splints are minor, and some are much more severe. Usually, you can still participate in your sport to some degree. This is done by cross-training instead of running or decreasing how much you are running during practices. The goal is to allow you to participate as much as possible without having pain. Your athletic trainers and coaches will work with you on your specific plan.

It is important to remember that if your athletic trainers and coaches are telling you that you have to rest, it is because it will help you heal and prevent your injury from becoming much worse. If shin splints are not treated, they can become stress fractures. These are more severe and involve sitting out from your sport for several weeks or even months.

## How can I prevent a muscle strain?

There are several ways to prevent shin pain from occurring or re-occurring. First, you always need to make sure that your shoes are supportive. Unsupportive shoes can cause shin pain and other injuries. You should also gradually build your activity level. Many cases of shin splints happen when athletes try to do too much too soon. Your body needs time to adjust, so build up your workouts gradually. Cross-training such as biking or swimming can also give your legs a rest while also still letting your body get a workout in.

If you have already had shin splints before, make sure you are continuing to perform your rehab exercises that were given to you by your athletic trainers. These exercises will help your legs stay strong so that your shins are supported.



## What else should I know?

Shin splints are very common, but it is important to let your athletic trainers and coaches know if you're having pain so that they can help you heal. Untreated shin splints can cause much more severe injuries, so you should deal with it as soon as it starts. If you ever have any questions, just ask!