

Shin Splint Problems?

If you are having shin splint problems or are beginning to feel pain or soreness in the front and/or side of your leg(s), then the following items may help you. Shin splint problems develop over time. It will take time to work through the therapies for them to subside. There is no quick cure.

1. Shoes.
 - A) Get a new pair of **running** shoes. If you are training for track you need running shoes. Do not use the ones you wore last year. The innersole has most likely been compromised or worn out.
 - B) Make sure the shoes fit properly. Your foot should not move around very much within the shoe. The laces should be tied snugly so that your foot is snug in the shoe. Learn the top loop technique.
2. Do not wear your running shoes as everyday shoes. Do not wear high heeled shoes as everyday shoes. Your feet need proper support. Shoes that are extra springy or have soft soles will probably lead to problems.
3. Get a set of Spenco insoles for your shoes, and use them every day. The Modesto State Head Coach says these have cut his XC and Track teams shin splint problems to **zero**.
4. The following exercises will help:
 - A) Lean back against a wall, fence, or rail and do “toe taps.” Do as many as you can until fatigue sets in. Rest. Do some more. Do the same exercise, but do “heel taps.”
 - B) On a regular basis, you should walk barefoot on the grass or turf. You can also do strides on grass or turf while barefoot. Also, you should try to claw or grip the grass or turf with your bare feet while standing still. A variation on the grass grip would be to practice holding a tennis ball with your barefoot.
 - C) Do toe raises on a flat surface or on a curb or piece of wood to allow you to get more range of motion during the stretch. When you are ready, hold weights while you do this for more resistance.
 - D) Walk on your heels 50-70 meters and your toes for a like distance as part of your drills **daily**. This exercise can be done barefoot or without shoes.
 - E) Do your ABCs daily. Sit on a surface that allows you to hang your feet off the floor or ground. Write the alphabet with each foot, using your big toe as a pointer. It is preferable to do this with your shoes off.
 - F) Do 4x4s (forward, backward, right, and left) with your feet with your legs extended.
 - G) Hero Pose: With the tops of your feet on the ground, sit on your heels for 2-3 minutes.
 - H) Walk 50-70 meters and stop every three steps. Reach across with your opposite hand and grab and pull-up your toes (right hand to left toes, left hand to right toes) for a second while raising your foot.
 - I) While standing on a step with the balls of your feet drop your heels down as far as you can for 5-10 seconds, and then go up on tip-toe for a similar time period. Repeat for 5-10 cycles.
 - J) While standing on a step with your heels raise your toes and hold for 5-10 seconds, and then drop them down as far as you can and hold for 5-10 seconds. Repeat for 5-10 cycles.
5. You can try massage on your lower legs. Using your thumbs run them down your legs very slowly and very hard. This is like a deep tissue massage. Start at the top of the calf muscles and finish just above the anklebone. Work your way all the way around your leg(s). It is better if someone else does the massage because the muscles need to be probed deeply.
6. Rolling your leg(s) with a large roller or stick roller may help as long as you use patience and persistence, but be very deliberate.
7. You should be icing 2-3 times per day. **DO NOT** ice just before practice or a meet; only ice after practice. Soaking in a tall bucket of water and ice is very helpful. Ice massage may be appropriate in some cases
8. Taping of the arches and/or spot taping of the lower leg may help in some cases, but this will not fix the problem.
9. Orthotics devices may help but there is no guarantee.