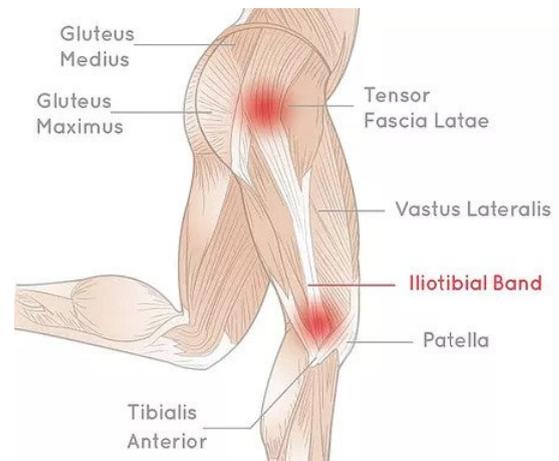


WHAT IS ILIOTIBIAL BAND PAIN?



OVENS VALLEY
PHYSIO & PILATES

- Iliotibial Band (ITB) pain is a common cause of knee pain
- The pain is usually felt on the **outside of the knee area** as pictured.
- The pain will get worse with more activity and is often worse after/the next day.
- The ITB is a **long band of connective tissue** that attaches the hip muscles all the way down to the outside of the knee.



What causes ITB pain?

The acute pain **is caused by irritation** (and sometimes inflammation) of the area **when there is an increase in load**. Our bodies are very adaptive and respond to changes in load by getting stronger. But when we increase by **too much, too soon they don't have time to adapt** so tissues and structures can become overloaded and irritated.

This change in load might look like a simple increase in volume of training or general activity or more subtle changes in activity levels.

Muscle weakness can also increase the load in the knee:

- **The glutes (hip/buttock muscles) are super important** for supporting the hip and knee and weakness in this area can increase the load on the ITB.
- The hip, knee and ankle **all work together** to create movement like squatting or going up the stairs. A deficit in one area will **cause an increase in load in the others**.

- Rate of force development (muscle power) is how quickly the muscles can switch on and contract. This is really important, particularly for running, because **without good power we can't absorb the load** with each step we take and this increases ground reaction forces and load through the ITB.

The way we move when we run, squat and jump can also increase the load in the ITB. While there is no right or wrong way to run, different running styles, in particular excessive heel striking or cross over gait, load up the hip and ITB. more. Similarly there are lots of different ways to do a squat, lunge or jump, some variations will load up the knee more and while this isn't bad, too much too soon can be a problem.

ALSO **sometimes a decrease in load can also cause overload.** As we start to decondition from reduced activity our capacity and strength of the knee drops below the requirements for day to day activities.

Do I need to stop running/jumping/training etc?

As physiotherapists it is our job to keep you moving as much as possible, even throughout rehab. Because ITB pain is not caused by an actual injury or structural damage, **some pain associated with ITB is absolutely okay.** We stick to **the 4/10 rule:** pain up to a 4/10 during any activity is okay, so long as the pain settles within 1 hour of finishing the activity and is not worse the next day after.

How do I fix my ITB pain?

- **Load management** is the **MOST IMPORTANT** part of treatment. This might involve adjusting your training sessions, trying cross training, changing the periodisation of weekly sessions or reducing the volume. Then we will gradually build you back up to where you need to be for your goals.
- **A progressive strength program** over a **minimum of 6-12 weeks** is needed to make good strength gains. This needs to be targeted at your specific needs for best results.
- An assessment of your running, walking or jumping to adjust technique as needed
- **Taping and manual therapy** can be a helpful **short term tools** to manage the pain and allow you to perform your rehab program
- Self management strategies like **spiky balling and foam rolling** can provide short term relief
- Sometimes orthotics or different footwear needs to be considered.