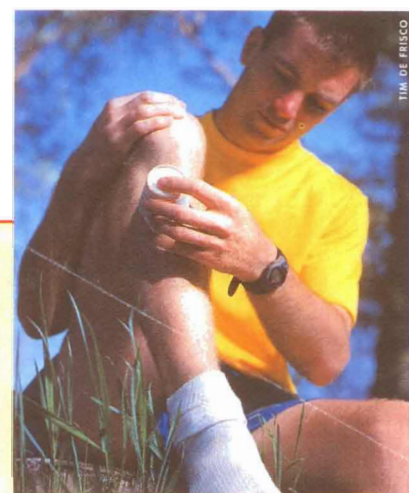


RUNNER'S WORLD

HEALTH & FITNESS

Fix Shin Pain Fast

If you've had shin pain and tried a remedy that didn't work, you probably misdiagnosed the problem, says podiatrist and RUNNER'S WORLD adviser Rick Braver, D.P.M. Look over Dr. Braver's simple shin-pain descriptions below to find the right cure for you.



TIM DE FRISCO

You feel:	You have:	You should:
A line of tenderness along your shin bone. The pain sets in at the beginning of a run but subsides once you've warmed up.	Shinsplints: An inflammation of the tissues in the front of your lower leg.	Ice your shins regularly, reduce your miles and stretch your shins by holding your foot up and drawing large circles with your big toe. See a podiatrist, who may prescribe orthotics. When you run, wear a shin sleeve (available at pharmacies) around your lower leg. Once the pain subsides, strengthen your shins with one of the following exercises: If you feel the pain on the inside of your leg, walk with your toes pointed out for 1 minute a day. Add an extra minute every other day until you can do this for 5 minutes. If you feel the pain on the outside of your leg, walk with your toes pointed in for 1 minute a day. Add a minute every other day until you can do this for 5 minutes.
A localized area of pain and possibly a lump somewhere along your shin bone. You feel the pain throughout your runs and sometimes when walking.	A stress fracture: A hairline break of one of the bones in your lower leg.	Take six weeks off from running. Cross-train by running in a pool, cycling or by lying on your back and pedaling with your feet in the air. Once your doctor gives you the okay, do the same strengthening exercises listed above.
Tightness, pressure or numbness in your lower leg that goes away a half-hour after you finish running.	Compartment syndrome: Excess fluid or pressure in your lower leg, which is often caused by overly developed muscles.	See a massage therapist once a week. If you feel discomfort along your outer calf, stretch the area twice a day. Do this by standing, bending the knee of the leg that hurts, grabbing that foot behind you and pulling it up toward your buttocks. Rest your other hand against a wall or some stationary object to keep your balance. Make sure to bring your toes as close to your buttocks as you can. Hold the stretch for 20 to 30 seconds, then stop and shake out your leg. Repeat two or three times. If you feel discomfort along your inner calf, modify this stretch by pulling your heel toward the middle of your body while pointing your toes out.

Taking it on the shin: Ice is the first course of action when you get shinsplints, but you'll have to reduce your mileage as well.



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