

IT Band Syndrome

Diagnosis Explanation:

Iliotibial (IT) Band Syndrome is an overuse injury where the IT band—a thick band of connective tissue running from the hip to the knee—becomes irritated due to excessive friction over the outer knee. It is common in runners, cyclists, and those with muscle imbalances. Symptoms include sharp pain on the outer knee, tenderness, and discomfort that worsens with repetitive knee bending (e.g., running, descending stairs).

Specific Work Modifications:

- **If your job requires standing or walking:** Use supportive footwear and take breaks to sit when possible.
- **If your job involves lifting:** Avoid excessive twisting or deep bending at the knees. Engage core muscles for stability.
- **If your job is desk-based:** Maintain good posture, avoid prolonged sitting with bent knees, and stretch periodically.
- **Avoid:** Prolonged standing, walking on uneven surfaces, deep squats, and repetitive stair climbing.

Specific Activity Modifications:

- **If you run or cycle:** Reduce mileage and intensity; opt for softer surfaces when running. Consider lower-resistance cycling.
- **If you hike:** Avoid steep inclines and descents. Use trekking poles to reduce knee strain.
- **If you do weightlifting:** Avoid deep squats, lunges, and leg presses. Focus on glute and hip strengthening.
- **Avoid:** Running on hard surfaces, prolonged cycling at high resistance, excessive stair climbing, and high-impact jumping.

Recommended Supplements:

- **Omega-3 Fatty Acids** - 1000mg daily to reduce inflammation.
- **Turmeric (Curcumin)** - 500-1000mg daily for pain relief.
- **Magnesium** - 300-400mg daily to aid muscle relaxation and prevent cramping.
- **Collagen Peptides** - 10g daily for tendon and ligament support.

Recommended Nutrition and Hydration:

- **Eat Anti-Inflammatory Foods** (berries, leafy greens, fatty fish, turmeric) to reduce irritation.
- **Increase Lean Protein** (chicken, fish, tofu, eggs) to aid muscle recovery.
- **Consume Hydrating Foods** (cucumber, watermelon, citrus) to maintain tissue

elasticity.

- **Limit Processed Foods & Sugars** to minimize inflammation.
- **Hydration:** Drink **8-10 cups of water daily** to maintain joint lubrication and prevent stiffness.

Home Exercise Prescription:

Early Phase (Reducing Pain & Inflammation):

- **IT Band Stretch** - Cross one leg behind the other, lean toward the opposite side, **hold 30 seconds, 3x/day**.
- **Foam Rolling IT Band** - Roll along the outer thigh slowly, **1-2 minutes, 2x/day**.
- **Quadriceps Stretch** - Pull foot towards glutes while keeping knees together, **hold 20 seconds, 3x/day**.

Strengthening Phase (Correcting Muscle Imbalance):

- **Clamshells** - Lie on your side, open and close knees like a clamshell, **10 reps, 2x/day**.
- **Glute Bridges** - Lie on your back, lift hips, hold for 5 seconds, repeat **10 reps, 2x/day**.
- **Lateral Band Walks** - Step sideways with a resistance band around thighs, **10 steps each way, 2x/day**.

Advanced Phase (Building Stability & Returning to Activity):

- **Single-Leg Balance** - Stand on injured leg for **10-20 seconds**, increase as tolerated.
- **Step-Ups** - Step onto a low platform, push through the heel, repeat **10 reps, 2x/day**.
- **Stationary Cycling** - Low resistance for **10-15 minutes/day**.

Helpful Books:

1. *Anatomy for Runners: Unlocking Your Athletic Potential for Health, Speed, and Injury Prevention* - Jay Dicharry.
2. *The Running Injury Recovery Program* - Dr. Paul Hough.

Click here for more orthopedic patient information.

Contact a Key West orthopedic clinic or reach out to Dr. Jason Pirozzolo.