

Physical Fitness

How do I overcome this muscle / knee pain?

Asked 13 years, 8 months ago Modified 12 years, 2 months ago Viewed 24k times



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I'm a 24 year old software engineer that basically sits at a desk all day. Obviously, this isn't a healthy lifestyle, so I decided to start running in order to get in shape. I'm not an athlete by any means, but I'm not fat...yet (I'm 5' 11" and weigh about 190).

Since I'm a noob when it comes to exercising, I decided to look online for some advice. I found the [Beginner's Guide to Running](#) and decided to take its advice. I hope that was wise.

Three weeks ago, I started running 3 days a week, for 30 minutes each of those days. For the first 10 minutes of each running session, I warmed up by walking. On the first week, I jogged for 1 minute and walked for 1 minute. I repeated this pattern for 10 minutes (I felt like an idiot in the gym, but I did it nonetheless), and then walked for 10 minutes to cool down.

The next week, I increased the jogging/walking intervals to 2 minutes, like the article mentioned. I felt like I was making pretty good progress.

By the end of the first day of the next/third week, my knees were hurting fairly bad. And, since they were still hurting throughout the rest of the week, I decided to rest for the remainder of that week.

I'm now on the fourth week of "running." Since my knees were feeling much better (probably not 100% healed), I decided to go run yesterday. This week, I wanted to increase my interval time to 2:30m jogging / 2m walking. However, after my first interval jogging, the knee pain came back with a vengeance. Also, my shin muscles hurt very bad and were very tight by the end of the session (they usually do get sore, but not this bad, this quick). So, instead of continuing the jogging intervals, I simply walked the remainder of the 30 minutes.

I need some advice on actions to take from here. I want to get in better shape, but my shins/knees seem like they just can't keep up right now.

Are there specific/better steps that I need to take in order to work up to what I'm wanting to do? Or, do I just need to grow some bigger balls and power through it?

Also, I figure my knees will heal with time (I hope), but my shin muscles being sore (not just tired, but they get very tight and sore) seems to be a more consistent issue. Is this due to me simply being out of shape, or do I need treatment in other ways?

running

exercise

muscle-soreness

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asked Feb 28, 2012 at 15:24



Stephen Watkins

141 1 1 4

what surface are you running on? – [DMoore](#) Jul 30, 2013 at 4:49I was running on a treadmill. – [Stephen Watkins](#) Jul 30, 2013 at 16:17

5 Answers

Sorted by: Highest score (default)



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Disclaimer: I'm not a doctor and this is not a diagnosis; I recommend you consult a physical therapist if the knee pain continues. However, from what I can tell these are very common cases with runners, especially with beginning runners who have just started developing their leg muscles.

With regard to the knee pain, it is most likely either Runners Knee or Iliotibial Band Syndrome as these are the two most common injuries ([see active.com article for more info](#)). There are several ways you can gradually rehabilitate your knee over time to remove the current pain and prevent future pain.

- Make sure your shoes offer proper support for your feet.
- Properly stretch your legs before running.
- Make sure you use proper form when running.
- Make sure there isn't an imbalance in your leg muscles by equally training them all (running does a lot for the hamstring, but not a lot for the quads).
- Reduce your mileage to prevent "overuse." Runner's Knee can come as a result of increasing your mileage too quickly; try going back to your 1-2 minute run 1-2 minute walk because your body might not be ready for much more than that (yet).
- Ice your knee and take anti-inflammatory drugs (ex. ibuprofen) whenever you experience knee pain.

With regard to the shin pain, this is almost certainly shin splints ([see wikipedia article](#)). The shin splints most likely came about because you increased your mileage too quickly, and as a result your muscles weren't strong enough to absorb the stress from running while fatigued. The same remedies for Runners Knee apply here, so make sure you stretch, workout the whole leg, have proper footwear, and so on.

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answered Feb 28, 2012 at 16:37



Moses

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I think it's sound advice to use "good form running":

- Shorten your stride
- Lean slightly forward
- Land on the midfoot
- Have a very light stride

Maybe take some collagen supplement for joints

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answered Feb 28, 2012 at 22:04



Lorenzo

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I think you're approaching this very wisely. As long as there's no underlying physical problem (which it doesn't sound like there is) it sounds like your body is a little slow to adjust to the new workload.

I would carefully listen to your body and only give it the workload it can handle + 10%. If you need to rest a bit to come back then do so. I would expect the progression to more running, etc to be a bit slower than the advice you're following.

Shin pain when starting a run-walk programme is pretty common in my experience. I personally don't believe it's shin splints. I find that new runners call any pain in their shin shin splints but you're not going to get a fracture after 3 weeks of very light work. Instead, my theory is that it's just the leg muscles getting used to the new workload and complaining a bit while they do it.

Monitor your body carefully, build the workload slowly. At some point you'll be comfortably running 30 mins a day and then things should be normal like other runners and you can pick other goals.

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answered Feb 28, 2012 at 16:40



Sarge

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What kind of running shoes are you wearing? Having the wrong pair of shoes on for any run can be tough on your joints!



If you're having that much pain with starting out, you may want to start with some foundational strength training first, particularly bodyweight exercises (squats, lunges, burpees, etc). This will give you a great base to start from, as your legs are not accustomed to exercise just yet.



Exercise itself is not supposed to be that painful! It's one thing to push through the usual strain, but extra pain is not a good sign.

Here's what WebMD says for Shin Splints:<http://www.webmd.com/fitness-exercise/shin-splints>
When I had problems with them, I walked on my heels for a few minutes every day, and they went away in just a few days.

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answered Feb 28, 2012 at 16:09



[Tyler Spraul](#)

21 1



I personally have experienced this when I go on a very hard run and not having done so for a while.

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I got the knee pain so bad that I couldn't bend my right knee to walk up stairs, or at least not without wincing. The doctor gave me anti-inflammatory medicine, and it cleared it right up. I think you should try taking some over the counter stuff yourself to see if that helps the knee pain. If it does, I would suggest (although I am not a doctor, this is just a theory of mine) taking a dose of over the counter anti-inflammatory medicine before you run.



I think the knee pain most probably comes from either or both of the following two things. The first is bad form and the second is bad shoes. Typical running shoes promote landing on the heel, while naturally, you should be landing on the balls of your feet. Landing on the heel creates more stress on your knee. Thus when you run, try to be conscious about how you are landing to decrease the impact on your knees.

I've had tight shins before from running too. It could be shin splints but probably it's just your muscles being shocked from exercise. In my case, it has always gone away within a few days. I always just do some stretching to loosen it up. Whichever side is feeling tight, point your toe as much as possible and make circles with your ankles. Normally loosens them up a bit.

So that's my 2 cents :P

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answered Feb 28, 2012 at 22:57



[moesef](#)

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