

Shin splints

Shin splints is a type of shin pain, usually caused by exercise. It's not serious and there are things you can do to help get better.

You will have pain and tenderness along your shin (the front part of your leg from the knee to the ankle).

Causes of shin splints

Shin splints happen when you've put too much stress on your leg. They usually happen when you do exercise like running.

You're more likely to get shin splints if:

- you have started exercising after not being active for some time
- you run or jump on hard surfaces
- you do not have a good running technique

Tips to help with shin splints

Shin splints usually get better within a few weeks. There are things you can do to get better quicker.

Do

- ✓ take paracetamol or ibuprofen to ease the pain
- ✓ put an ice pack (or bag of frozen vegetables) in a towel on your shin for up to 20 minutes every 2 to 3 hours
- ✓ switch to gentle exercise such as yoga or swimming while healing
- ✓ exercise on soft ground, if you can, when you're feeling better
- ✓ warm up before exercise and stretch after exercise
- ✓ make sure your trainers or shoes support your feet properly

Don't

- ✗ do not continue doing the exercise that caused your shin splints
- ✗ do not rush back into exercise at the level you were at – build your exercise routine back up slowly

When to contact your GP

Contact your GP if:

- you've tried things to help but the pain is not getting better after a week
- the pain is severe or getting worse
- you've injured your shin

Treating shin splints

Your GP will ask about your symptoms and examine your leg. If it's not getting better, they may advise you to attend a physiotherapist.

Content supplied by the [NHS](#) and adapted for Ireland by the HSE

Page last reviewed: 15 April 2021

Next review due: 15 April 2024

This project has received funding from the Government of Ireland's Sláintecare Integration Fund 2019 under Grant Agreement Number 123.

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