

# athlete matters

sports physiotherapists



## Runners Knee

The iliotibial band (ITB) is a connective tissue that runs down the outside of the thigh it acts to stabilise the hip and knee during the stance phase of running. Iliotibial band friction syndrome also called 'runners knee' is highly common in elite and recreational distance runners alike. Those particularly susceptible are endurance runners who are building up their mileage.

As an Official London Marathon Injury clinic we see a lot of this condition in the build up to the race and have loads of experience dealing with it successfully. Pain will be felt on the outside of the thigh typical on the outside of the knee and in the early stages will increase as the run progresses. The other group of runners who suffer this injury are fell runners who aggravate the problem whilst descending.

The causes of all of the above are usually related to training but more often than not biomechanics typically reduced control of the hip by the gluteal muscles.

Physiotherapists should diagnose the condition and will treat the cause of the problem using primarily deep tissue massage to the ITB, self massage using a foam roller is often recommended. Exercises are very important to strengthen the quadriceps improve core stability particularly in the gluteal muscles. Stretches to release any tightness in the ITB and hip muscles may also be given. Acupuncture is very effective in helping release muscle tension and reducing inflammation on the outside of the knee. The problem will settle with a gradual return to training accompanied by a hip core stability exercise programme.

Athlete Matters are Chartered Physiotherapists who specialise in treating and preventing running injuries.  
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