

Stretching and Strengthening Exercises for Iliotibial Band Syndrome

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In the May 2004 issue of Running Times Magazine, Brian Fullem examined the causes of iliotibial band syndrome in runners and considered various treatment options. The photos that follow depict a number of effective stretches and exercises that can help runners beat this common injury.

All photos below assume that it is the right leg that is the injured leg. Repeat all stretches 3-5 times, 3 different times a day. With all these stretches you may feel it more up near the hip as opposed to down lower where you may be experiencing pain; this is normal.



Stretch #1: Pull foot up to back of buttocks. Cross the uninjured leg over the injured leg and push down, hold for 30 seconds.



Stretch #2: Cross injured leg behind and lean towards the uninjured side. This stretch is best performed with arms over the head, creating a "bow" from ankle to hand on the injured side (unlike how it is depicted).



Stretch # 3: Cross injured leg over the uninjured side and pull the leg as close to your chest as possible.



Foam Roller (left and below): Roll your injured leg over the foam roller, add more time gradually each day to help mobilize your tissues and break up scar tissue.





Balance on 1 Leg Strengthening (left and below): May start just balancing on one foot when brushing your teeth. Gradually you can add challenges such as using a soccer ball and moving the ball in different directions. Another good method is to balance on one foot and play catch with yourself with a tennis ball against a wall or dribble a basketball. Start out with one minute at a time, and build up to 3-5 minutes.





Side Leg Lifts: Keep the back of the leg and buttocks against the wall. Slide the leg up the wall and hold at the top for 5 seconds then slide back down. Point toes down.



Start with one set of 20 each leg, after 1 week add a second set of 5. Every 2 days add 5 more as long as it is being well tolerated until you build up to 3 sets of 20 lifts.



Strengthening with Theraband (left and below): Loop one end and close in the door. Loop other end around the uninjured leg. Bend your knee on the injured leg and balance on the injured leg. Put your uninjured leg through a range of running motion, going up and back. Build up to 3-5 minutes, make sure to exercise both legs.



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