

The plan

BEAT SHIN SPLINTS IN FOUR WEEKS

TREAT YOUR RUNNING INJURIES WITHIN ONE MONTH BY FOLLOWING THIS STEP-BY-STEP REHABILITATION AND TRAINING PLAN

Meet the expert

Emma Deakin

Emma Deakin works for the English Institute of Sport (EIS) as lead physiotherapist with the Podium and Development British Triathlon squads



- Reduced muscular endurance around the shin
- Excessive range and speed of foot pronation (rolling in of the foot on impact with the road)
- Training errors/changes
- Incorrect footwear
- Poor muscle function around the hip and knee, causing overloading of the shin

SHIN SPLINTS or Medial Tibial Stress Syndrome (MTSS) is quite a common problem among athletes, especially endurance athletes. MTSS is often described as a diffuse, dull ache along the border of the shin, normally worse after running or weight-bearing activity. Shin pain is often difficult to treat as there are so many factors that contribute to the pain, making every individual's diagnosis and treatment plan different.

If you are experiencing ongoing shin pain, the most important thing to do is to consult a physiotherapist to rule out more serious problems, like stress fracture or compartment syndrome. Your physiotherapist can then identify why you have pain. The most common risk factors are:

As shin pain is normally associated with impact – particularly running on hard surfaces – your swimming and cycling training should be pain-free and therefore you're fine to continue as normal. If you do find even these sessions painful, you can easily reduce the load by removing the push off the wall when swimming and staying in the saddle during your rides.

This four-week rehabilitation plan focuses on your return to running and, at each stage of the plan, you should be pain-free before progressing the load. There are six rehab exercises described in the four-week plan – don't be tempted to skip any of them. Feel free to swap the days around to suit your timetable, listen to your body and progress at your own pace.



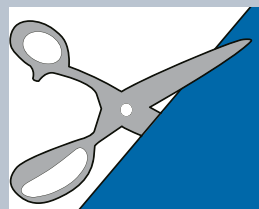
Are these plans for you?

This plan is right for you if you:

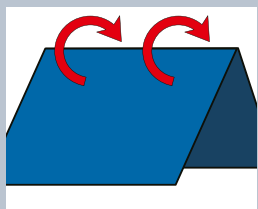
- Don't have a goal race in the next six weeks
- Are in regular training
- Want to focus on your rehabilitation

How it works

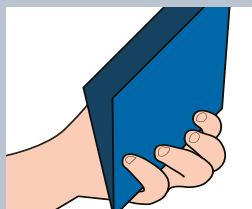
Get your guide ready to go



Cut out the guide following the dotted outline



Fold the guide in quarters using the fold guides



Now carry it with you for reference while training

Your Shin Pain Exercises

Triathlon YOUR 4-WEEK PLAN

EXERCISE 1
TOE RAISES

Stand against a wall with your back and legs straight. Pull your toes and forefoot up to work the muscle in the front of the shin. This might be uncomfortable at first, particularly if you've been suffering shin splints for a while, but persevere and the pain will eventually lessen.

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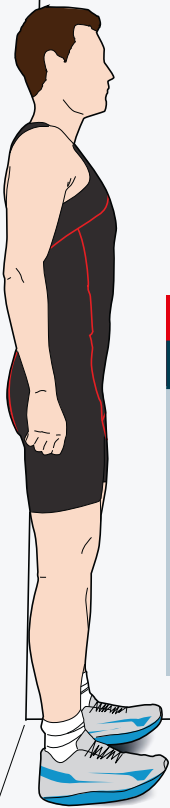
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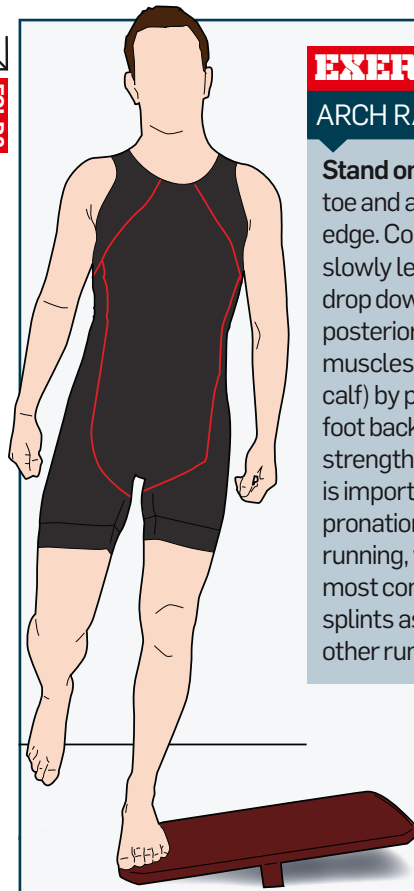


FOLD 2

EXERCISE 2

ARCH RAISING/LOWERING

Stand on a step with your big toe and arch resting at the edge. Control your foot as you slowly let the arch of your foot drop down. Work the tibialis posterior (one of the smaller muscles at the back of the calf) by pulling the arch of the foot back up into position. The strengthening of this muscle is important to help control of pronation of the foot while running, which is one of the most common causes of shin splints as well as numerous other running problems.

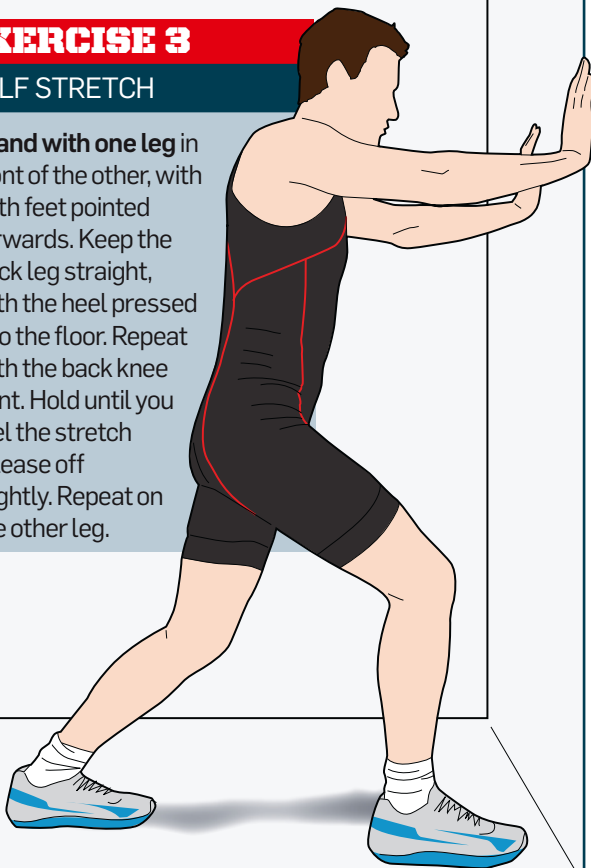


FOLD 1

EXERCISE 3

CALF STRETCH

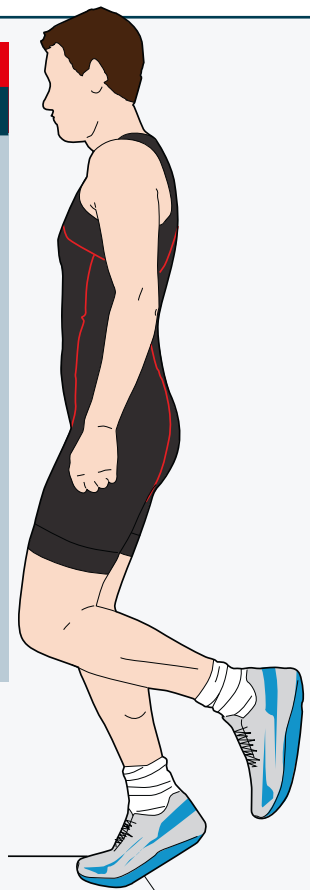
Stand with one leg in front of the other, with both feet pointed forwards. Keep the back leg straight, with the heel pressed into the floor. Repeat with the back knee bent. Hold until you feel the stretch release off slightly. Repeat on the other leg.

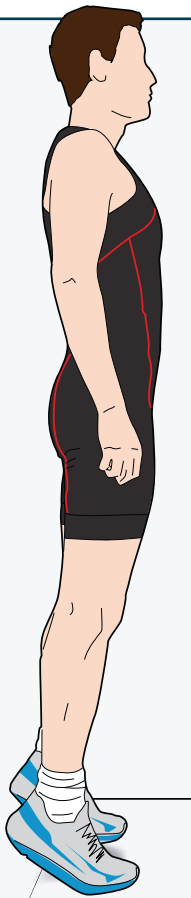


EXERCISE 4

BENT-LEG CALF RAISES

Stand on a step holding on to a wall for support. Maintain a slight bend in the knee. Rise up onto your tip-toes, hold for a few seconds, then slowly lower back down again. Try to use the full range of the muscle and keep the foot in a neutral alignment. This exercise will primarily work the soleus, the postural muscle of the calf, which is important for endurance running and control around the ankle when running.





EXERCISE 5

STRAIGHT-LEG CALF RAISES

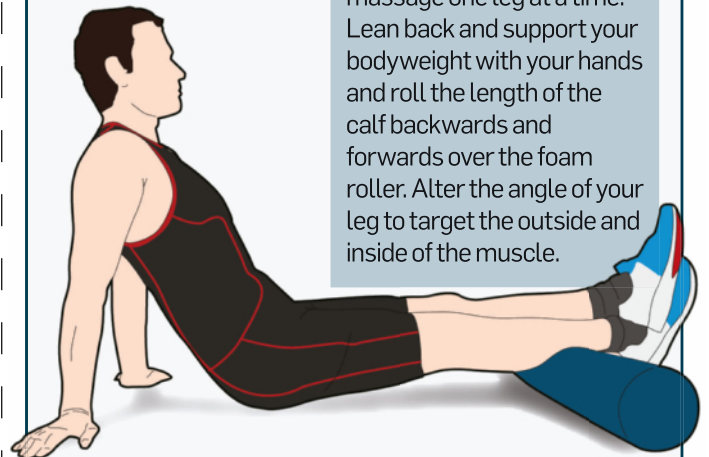
This is very similar to the calf raise exercise on the previous page, but this time you need to keep your leg straight throughout. Stand on a step, holding on to a wall for support. Rise up onto your tip-toes, hold this position for a few seconds then slowly lower back down again. Try to use the full range of the muscle by keeping the movement controlled and keeping your foot in a neutral alignment throughout the exercise.

FOLD 2

EXERCISE 6

FOAM ROLLER CALF MASSAGE

Loosening the muscles in your calf can help take the strain off your shins. To do this, sit with a foam roller under your calf, stacking one foot on top of the other so that you can massage one leg at a time. Lean back and support your bodyweight with your hands and roll the length of the calf backwards and forwards over the foam roller. Alter the angle of your leg to target the outside and inside of the muscle.



FOLD 1

WEEK 01

Normal swim and bike training throughout the next four weeks

WEEK 02

Stretching and foam roller daily

WEEK 03

Shin muscle strengthening to fatigue on aqua-jogging days

WEEK 04

Running every other day, daily stretching and shin muscle strengthening to fatigue

	WEEK 01	WEEK 02	WEEK 03	WEEK 04
Mon	Rest from weight-bearing activity. Local ice and mild analgesics	Aqua-jogging session 20x60sec efforts with 30secs rest (20mins total)	Treadmill run 3x2mins with 60secs rest	Grass running 15mins
Tue	Review with podiatrist for suitable supportive or shock-absorbing insoles	Walking drills Toe/heel walks, butt kicks, high knees, ankling (find video demonstrations on YouTube.com if you're not sure how to do these drills correctly)	Aqua-jogging session 4x5mins efforts with 60secs rest	Walking/running drills
Wed	Bent- and straight-leg calf stretch Foam roller soft tissue release to the calf	Shin muscle strengthening as in week one, to fatigue	Treadmill run 5mins run, 60secs rest, 3mins run, 60secs rest, 2mins run	Grass running 20mins
Thur	Lower limb alignment exercises Squats, single-leg squats. Glute strengthening: clams (lying on side with legs bent, raising top leg), bridging (lying on back with legs bent and raising hips from floor, squeezing glutes)	Aqua-jogging session 10x2mins efforts with 30secs rest (20mins total)	Aqua-jogging session 4x5mins efforts with 60secs rest	Strength and conditioning Lower limb alignment and glutes
Fri	Shin muscle strengthening Straight-leg calf raises, bent-leg calf raises, toe raises, arch raising/lowering, 2x10	Shin muscle strengthening as in week one, to fatigue	Grass running 10mins	Road running 20mins, with increasing tempo
Sat	Aqua-jogging session 15x45secs efforts with 15secs rest (15mins)	Treadmill run 5x60secs jog with 60secs rest	Aqua-jogging session 4x5mins efforts with 60secs rest	Rest day
Sun	Shin muscle strengthening Straight-leg calf raises, bent-leg calf raises, toe raises, arch raising/lowering, 2x15	Rest day	Rest day	