



Coach-Athlete Q&A

A look at some coach-replies to common questions by topic.

Q: I think that I have shin-splints. How do I know and what do I do?
RVM

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A: Hello Rob,
My name is Kelly Heath, and I am a physical therapist on the coaching staff with TrimyCoach. I have some questions for you-you can think about your answers and reply to this email if you so desire.

Have you ever had shin splints before? They are usually located in the outer front muscle (the anterior tibialis) of the lower shin, or the inner muscle down lower on the leg (the posterior tibialis). They typically hurt more in the beginning of a run, stop during the middle, and then hurt more at the end of a run.

- How many miles do you run on the indoor track?
- Whatkind of shoes do you wear while running?
- When was the last time you bought new ones?
- Do you stretch your legs before and after running?

These are things you need to consider when trying to figure out an injury. If you are sure it's shin splints, the best thing to do is ice the leg after running with an ice massage (fill a paper cup with water, place in freezer; once frozen, rip off top rim of cup and hold onto cup while massaging the ice onto skin) for 5-10 minutes.

YYou need to stretch the affected area. If you don't know how, contact a physical therapist or other exercise specialist in your area who is knowledgeable on this subject.

A shin splint is the layman's term for tibialis tendonitis-sometimes the muscle fibers may be tearing off the tibia bone at the origin of the muscle. Strengthening the affected muscle is a must, and eccentric loading of the muscle and tendons (once you are painfree) is the most effective way to rehabilitate the leg. The anterior tibialis muscle works eccentrically (it lengthens as it contracts) as your foot has struck the ground at the heel and it is lowering to the ground to prepare for push-off.

You may want to have Sonni, Randy or physical therapist evaluate your running technique as well to determine if your biomechanics are incorrect.

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