

Shin Splint Recovery Exercises

Medial tibial stress syndrome or shin splints as it's more commonly known can sometimes [slip](#) under the radar of most athletes and coaches until the condition has got quite bad.

So what should you actually do to lower your risk of medial tibial stress syndrome? Well, here are two quick exercises you can do at anytime of the day, no matter where you are.

(1) Wall Shin Raises:

Simply stand with your back to a wall, with your heels about the length of your feet away from the wall. Then, lean back until your buttocks and shoulders rest against the wall. Dorsiflex both ankles simultaneously, while your heels remain in contact with the ground. Bring your toes as far toward your shins as you can, and then lower your feet back toward the ground, but do not allow your forefeet to contact the ground before beginning the next repeat. Simply lower them until they are close to the ground, and then begin another repetition. Complete about 12 to 15 reps.

Once you have finished the reps, maintain your basic position with your back against the wall, dorsiflex your ankles to close to their fullest extent, and then quickly dorsiflex and plantar flex your ankles 15 times over a very small range of motion (smaller than the nearly full range you use for the basic reps; the emphasis here is on quickness). These short, quick ankle movements are called pulses.

As you gain strength over time, make the wall shin raises progressively more difficult by advancing from one set of 15 reps to two and then three sets of 15 (for the basic raises and the pulses). It's okay to walk around for 15 to 30 seconds between sets. Once you can quite comfortably complete 3 x 15 of the double-leg raises (both basic and quick), progress to the single-leg wall shin raise. The basic position for this [exercise](#) is as before, except that you begin with only one foot in contact with the ground; the other foot rests lightly on the wall behind you. Now, full [body weight](#) is on one foot - as it is during running - as you carry out the overall routine, and the exercises are considerably more difficult. Begin with 12 to 15 reps per foot (both for the basic exercise and pulses), and progress to 3 x 15 (basic and pulse) on each foot as your strength increases. There's no need to rest between sets; simply carry out 15 reps on one foot plus pulses, shift over to the other for 15 repetitions and pulses, return to the original foot, and so on until you have completed three sets with each foot.

(2) Heel Step-Downs:

These are simple but devastatingly effective exercises for preventing medial tibial stress syndrome (MTSS). Begin with a natural, erect body position, with your feet about shoulder-width apart, and then step forward with one foot. The length of the step should be moderate - as though you were walking in your normal manner. When your heel makes contact with the ground, stop the foot from fully plantar flexing, e. g., use your shin muscles to keep the [sole of the foot](#) from making contact with the ground. After heel contact, the ball of your foot should descend no more than an inch toward the floor or ground; your foot is held in check by the eccentric contractions of your dorsiflexors (shin [muscles](#)). Return your foot to the starting position (back by the other foot), and repeat this basic stepping action a total of 15 times. Then, shift over to the other foot and complete 15 steps. As with the wall shin raises, progress to three sets of 15 reps over time.

Once you are the master of the basic heel step-downs, perform the same exercise - but with dramatically longer steps. Using lengthier steps will increase the accelerating forces placed on the dorsiflexors and force them to work more forcefully and quickly, as they must do during running. Start with one set of 15 reps of long steps per foot, and progress to 3 x 15 on each foot over time.

Finally, you will be ready to carry out the heel step-downs from a high step, which will increase the forces on your shin muscles to the greatest extent - and build the greatest amount of strength. Use a bench or exercise platform which is

about four inches off the ground to carry out your stepping. Aside from beginning each step from a bench, your movements are the same as they are in the basic step-downs; the idea is to land on the heel of the forward foot and then use the shin muscles to prevent the sole of the foot from making contact with the ground. The actual length of the step is moderate at first (you can progress to long steps later). As before, begin with 15 reps per foot, and progress to three sets of 15 reps as you gain strength and coordination.

(3) While seated, write the alphabet with your toes. Do both uppercase and lowercase letters with each foot. Focus on using your toes to do the writing, rather than moving your whole leg. You should feel the muscles at the front of your shins getting fatigued.

(4) In similar fashion to the previous exercise, draw a star with your feet, repeating over and over again. Do it both forward and backward for each foot. Once again, this exercise should be done until the shin muscles are fatigued.