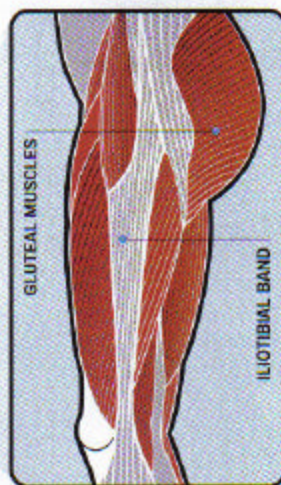


PREVENTIVE STEPS

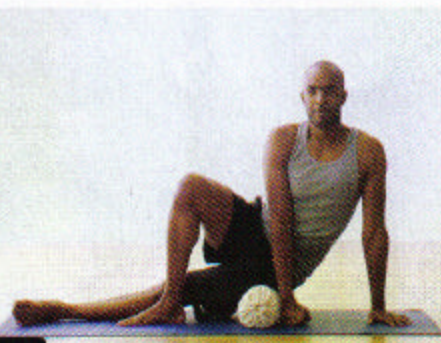
AVOIDING COMMON RUNNING INJURIES

THE PROBLEM ITB Syndrome (ITBS)

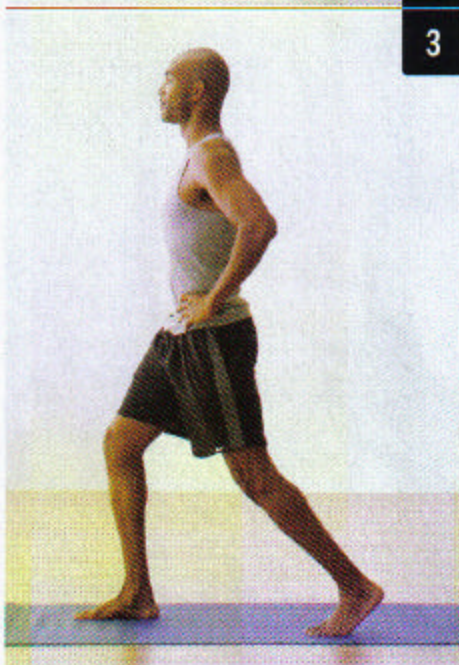
The iliotibial band (ITB) is tissue that runs from the gluteal muscles, down to the knee, to the top of the shinbone. It stabilizes the pelvis, knee, and thigh, and rotates the leg. Biomechanical problems and poor training habits can force the ITB to twist to the point of irritation, says John Cianca, M.D., of the Baylor College of Medicine. ITBS casualties may feel a stinging sensation on the outside of the knee or along the length of the ITB. Pain may not be present until mid-run. Here are four ways to avoid it. —SHELLEY DROZD



1



2



3



4

1

Strengthen your glutes to improve running form plus hip and foot alignment. Lie on your side, bending your lower leg for balance but keeping the top leg straight. Tighten your abs, and extend your top leg behind you. Raise your top leg 30 degrees, and hold it for one second. Slowly lower the leg. Start with one set of 15 reps; work up to three sets of 30 repetitions on each side.

2

Self-massage helps release the tight tissue and decrease tension on the band. Lie with your hip on top of a three- to six-inch cylindrical foam bolster (you can find one at sprproducts.com), keeping the leg straight. With your hands on the floor supporting your upper body, cross the opposite leg over the bolstered thigh and roll from your "front pocket" area down the entire side of the thigh to the knee joint. Switch sides and repeat for three minutes.

3

Stretch the front hip muscles to allow adequate stride length. From a semi-lunge stance, bend your back leg's knee, keeping your heel off the floor. Placing your hands on your hips for balance, tilt the pelvis forward to flatten the lower back and stretch the front of the hip. Stretch the front of the thigh by dipping into a deep lunge. Hold for 30 seconds, and then return to the starting position. Repeat three times on each side.

4

Build form to improve your core strength and stability and reduce injury. Here's how: Stand in front of a full-length mirror with your back leg on a four- to eight-inch high step and your front leg on the floor. Placing your hands on hips for balance, slowly squat down, keeping your front knee over the second toe, a consistent arch in the foot, and your pelvis straight and stable. Do three sets of 15 reps on each side. —Exercises from MARC GUILLET, physical therapist at Agile Physical Therapy, Palo Alto, California.