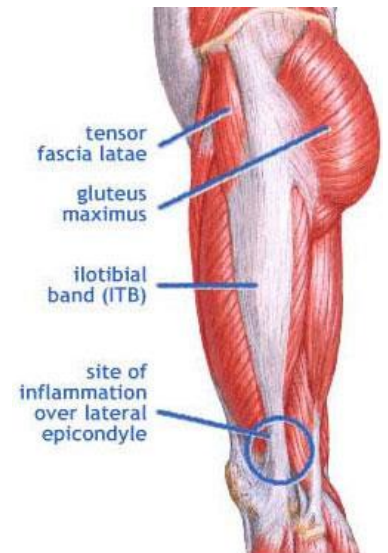


Iliotibial Band (ITB) Syndrome

The Iliotibial Band (ITB) is a structure which runs down the outside of your thigh. The ITB connects to a hip muscle called the Tensor Fascia Lata (TFL), it runs down the outside of the hip and blends to the ITB approximately 1/3 of the way down the outside of the thigh. The ITB then continues down the outside of the thigh gradually narrowing until it inserts onto several structures on the outside of the knee, namely: Lateral epicondyle of the femur, Gerdy's tubercle on the tibia and the lateral side of the patella (via the patella retinaculum)

The ITB acts to increase stability of the lateral part of the knee and lower thigh. It is under tension both when the knee is bending and when it is straightening, and hence can help to stabilize the lateral knee in both positions. Due to its location and function it is a difficult area to stretch effectively, and is predisposed to becoming tight.



ITB syndrome is a condition where the ITB gets inflamed and painful, especially over the lower 1/3 which is closest to the outside of the knee. Adhesions and thickenings can also develop in the main body of the ITB. The main cause of this irritation and pain is tightness of the ITB, which increases the tension at its insertion point at the knee and can cause irritation and compression. This tightness can develop in a number of ways, and is especially likely to occur when muscles attaching to and surrounding the ITB are tight, e.g. TFL, Gluteal muscles and Hamstrings.

Other causes include:

- Excessive running downhill or on an angle/curve (e.g. running track)
- Incorrect Bike Setup (wrong seat height, pedal position, foot position etc)
- Biomechanical abnormalities (running/cycling/lifting technique)
- Structural variations at the knee, hip or foot.

Treatment involves decreasing the irritation in the ITB through massage, stretches and exercises. We then need to reverse the causes of the tightness by altering muscle length, biomechanics, techniques and training habits so that the pain does not reoccur.