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"treating the cause of your problem, not just the symptoms"

Iliotibial Band Syndrome

A very common complaint I hear in my office every week is pain at the outside of the hip. The patient often complains of a burning pain, worsening at night or during inactivity, which came on for no apparent reason and just won't go away. As well, these patients do not typically have arthritis in the hip joint.

For patients with the above symptoms, their hip joint is often healthy. However, the area over the actual hipbone is often tender to the touch and the muscles above the hip joint typically are very tight and painful. This overall problem is called "iliotibial band syndrome" and can be easily addressed with conservative chiropractic treatment.

What is the iliotibial band? The iliotibial band is a thick band of fibrous tissue that runs down the outside of the leg. It begins at the hip and extends to the outer side of the shinbone (tibia) just below the knee joint. The band functions in coordination with several of the thigh muscles to provide stability to the outside of the knee joint.

What is iliotibial band syndrome? Iliotibial band syndrome (ITBS) occurs when there is irritation to this band of fibrous tissue. The irritation usually occurs over the outside of the hip and/or knee joint. Situated between the fibrous band and the thighbone (femur) is a bursa, which should facilitate a smooth, gliding motion of the fibrous band over the bone. However, when the bursa and the iliotibial band become inflamed, painful symptoms often arise.

Why did you get iliotibial band syndrome? People who suddenly increase their level of activity often develop iliotibial band syndrome. Others who are prone to ITBS include individuals with mechanical problems of their gait such as people who overpronate (flat feet), have leg length discrepancies, or are bow-legged. Whatever the cause, the muscles above the hip joint are usually too tight and since they attach to the iliotibial band, it becomes very tight as well. This is what increases the friction on the bone and eventually leads to the inflammation arising.

What is the treatment for iliotibial band syndrome? Treatment of ITBS begins with proper footwear (usually with custom orthotics), icing the area to reduce inflammation, and a specific stretching routine. Limiting excessive activities, resting for a period of

time, and incorporating low-impact cross-training activities may also help. In addition to the above methods of treatment, I also use trigger point therapy on the muscles above the hip joint and the application of Interferential Current over the irritated areas.

If you or someone else you know potentially has iliotibial syndrome, it can be treated conservatively without drugs or surgery. If you have any questions on how a chiropractor can help, feel free to contact me directly.