

Warming up your muscles key to preventing injuries

By **HEATHER HODGSKISS**
TMC Physical Therapist

The second most common question that I have been asked recently is, "Why am I getting pain in the front of my shin?" Pain in the shin bone (tibia) is caused by increased stress to that area. Sometimes it may be a small tear in the muscle (tibialis anterior) or it could be more serious, such as a stress fracture. Most often you can rule out a fracture with X-rays or a history of being very active, such as a cross-country runner. For the most of us, if there is pain in the front of the shin it is due to a small tear in the tibialis anterior muscle. If you have changed your normal routine (workout), or "play" hard over a weekend (a weekend warrior), you might get shin splints.

So, how do you help decrease the chance of getting shin splints? There are several ways to decrease the chances of shin splints. Proper footwear is key. We are approaching sandal and flip-flop wearing season. Shoes that are more likely to cause overuse of the anterior tibialis muscle and toe extensor muscles are: 1.) shoes that do not have a toe box, for example flip-flops; or 2.) the new fashionable women's "Mary Jane's" flat shoes. If it is possible, wear proper footwear for walking activities.

Another way to decrease

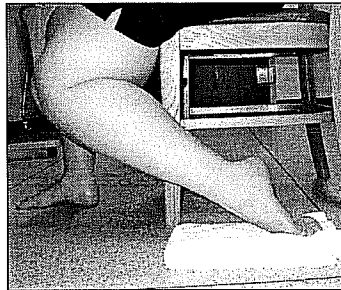


Figure 1.



Figure 2.

chances of shin splints is warming up before performing an activity. For example, if you are walking on a treadmill, don't start out walking at a 5 percent grade. Instead, start at a 0 percent grade. Start at a slow walking pace with gradual buildup to a selected pace. Your muscles need time to warm up—overloading them by starting too quickly causes too much stress which leads to micro-stress and tears.

There are several effective

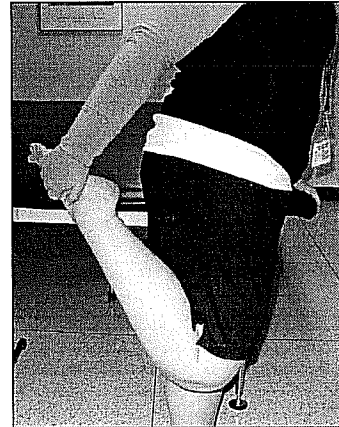


Figure 3.

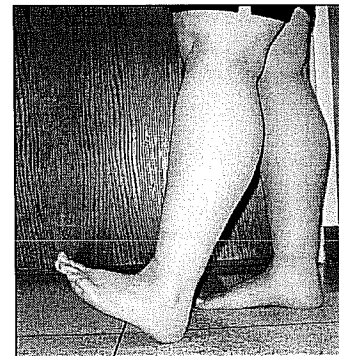


Figure 4.

ways to stretch the front of the shins. One of the easiest ways is sitting in a chair: place the top part of your foot on the ground and lean your body weight over your foot (Figure 1). Another good stretch is standing, holding onto the bottom of your foot (Figures 2 and 3). All stretches should be held for 15 to 30 seconds. See



Figure 5.

the pictures that accompany this article.

Some ways to strengthen the anterior tibialis muscle are by doing exercises that lift the front part of the foot up, such as tapping. Some examples of this are: walking across the room with your forefoot off the ground, (Figure 4); or, while sitting on a chair, place an ankle weight or buckle filled with coins on your forefoot, flex your ankle toward the ceiling, (Figure 5).

If you are one of the many sufferers of these ailments affecting your feet or lower leg, talk to your physician about proper treatments and, if physical therapy would be beneficial, contact Teton Medical Center Physical Therapy at 406-466-5763 for appointments and information at any of the three locations, Choteau, Fairfield, and Conrad, where these services can be performed.

DON'T MISS TMC SPRING HEALTH SCREENING

April 21-25 • 7:30 a.m. to noon

TESTS AVAILABLE:

- CBC** (Complete Blood Count. Screens for infection and anemia) - \$25
- Lipid Panel** (Includes complete cholesterol and triglycerides report) - \$25
- Health Panel** (Checks metabolism including electrolytes and glucose.) - \$45
- TSH** (Thyroid Stimulating Hormone. Checks thyroid function) - \$25
- Also offered: PSA** (Screens for prostate cancer) - \$25;
- Blood type/Rh** - \$20

CBC, Lipid Panel, Health Panel, TSH offered together for \$55.

Fasting required for Lipid and Health Panel tests. Drink LOTS of water. Don't eat or drink anything but water after midnight.

- Take your medication as prescribed.
- No appointment necessary.
- Doctor's orders not required.

TMC team begins budget process

By H. Ray Gibbons
TMC Administrator

March is the beginning of our annual budget preparation process for the next fiscal year which begins July 1, 2008. We will present the recommended operating, capital projects and capital equipment budgets to the TMC Board of Trustees at the regular May board meeting. During March-May we will be reviewing all of the operations at TMC.

Our challenge is to project the federal and state payment policies which establish more than 80 percent of our annual revenues. The federal fiscal year begins in October of each year and the state fiscal year begins in July of each year. This year is interesting because the federal budget year that began in October 2007 has not been approved as of

March 2008. This means the usual federal guidance for October 2007 to September 2008 is not available. The result is TMC will be conservative and not project any increase payments from Medicare or Medicaid.

The TMC management team will review the efficiencies of care delivered to the TMC inpatients and extended living residents; X-ray, clinical laboratory, physical therapy and occupational therapy services and all support areas. This effort is the essential part of stewardship of the TMC health-care resources which will ensure that TMC "will be here" when needed by the people we serve.

I welcome any ideas or suggestions you may have for the quality healthcare services provided by the TMC Team.

Career Corner

DPT

The professional graduate program in physical therapy grants the doctor of physical therapy (D.P.T.) degree. The requirements for applying to the graduate program include a bachelor's degree and completing the application procedures. The bachelor's degree can be in other related fields, not necessarily physical therapy.

This program is offered through the University of Montana in Missoula. At UM the application procedure involves several processes, which include a written application and a formal interview with physical therapy professors. From this application process, 32 applicants are accepted into the program.

UM is the only university in Montana to offer this program. All inclusive the length of education could be as much as eight years to earn the doctorate degree, with the doctoral program comprising about three years. This academic program in physical therapy allows for specialties, if chosen, such as geriatrics, pediatrics, surgical rehabilitation, and injury rehabilitation, to name a few. If you are a truly dedicated individual, this could be the medical field of interest for you.

If you are interested in physical therapy, contact TMC Human Resources at 466-5763 for information or a tour through our Physical Therapy Department.

PTA

Teton Medical Center has on staff a physical therapy assistant (PTA). The role of a PTA is to assist the physical therapist in carrying out the rehabilitation plan of care. The PTA can also be responsible for documentation.

The physical therapist assistant program is generally a two-year, associate of applied science degree. The academic program for an associate of applied science degree as an assistant physical therapist can be completed through our local college of technologies, including the Montana State University-COT at Great Falls.

If you are interested in a medical career, call TMC Human Resources at 466-5763 for more information or arrange a tour of the Physical Therapy Department.



TMC Spa Program, martial arts classes

TMC has professionals to meet all your fitness needs including our Spa Program, Tai Chi, and QiGong. We can help you accomplish your goals of toning, building muscle, increasing balance, and much-much more.

Tai Chi and QiGong are internal forms of martial arts designed for health and wellness. These forms are slowed versions of martial art movements with a focus on increasing: balance, strength, endurance, posture, and breathing; they also decrease stress, incontinence, arthritic pain and aid in fall prevention.

All fitness levels are welcome

to come and join Scott Sand, PTA, SPT, the facilitator with more than 20 years experience in the martial arts and more than 10 years experience with Tai Chi and QiGong. The classes are held at the Choteau High School Multi-Purpose Room on Wednesdays from 5:15 to 6:15 p.m. The price of the classes is \$2 per session. Questions? Please call Scott at the TMC Physical Therapy Department at 466-5763.

TMC's Spa Program allows for a number of variations in healthy exercise, no matter your fitness level. You can register and make an appointment at TMC's Physical Therapy Department with Scott

Sand, PTA, or Heather Hodgskiss, DPT, to go over what your fitness level is, set goals for yourself, also schedule the best time for you to come in. The initial evaluation cost is \$40, and each month thereafter the monthly charge of \$25 is for use of the physical therapy equipment. No physician order is required, just dedication to being healthy.

The P.T. Department hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. After hours (5 p.m. to 9 p.m.), there is a sign-in log at the nursing station to receive the key for access to the equipment. For more information, call TMC at 466-5763.

TMC offers therapy at 3 locations

Teton Medical Center has local physical therapy, occupational therapy and sports medicine at three locations staffed with three physical therapists, one occupational therapist and one physical therapy assistant for clinics in Choteau, Fairfield, and Conrad. Comprehensive treatments are individually developed to meet your recovery needs.

Service options are available

at all three sites unless noted and include: 12 (Critical Access Hospital) acute beds, inpatient services at Choteau, swing bed rehabilitative services at Choteau on-site, injury or surgical rehabilitation, geriatric physical therapy, pain management, workers compensation rehabilitation, Medicare-approved rehabilitation, and occupational therapy (primarily Choteau).

TMC has comprehensive outpatient treatment at all three sites for: neck pain/tension, low back/sciatica, shoulder pain/joint pain, SI/hip pain, tendonitis, arthritic pain, fibromyalgia, carpal tunnel, tennis elbow, and general orthopedic rehabilitation.

For appointments or information call our staff in Fairfield at 467-3800, in Choteau at 466-5763, and in Conrad at 271-7602.

Rehabilitation options available through TMC

How would you like to be close to your family and friends when recuperating? Sounds like a good choice to make.

Teton Medical Center has a "Swing Bed" option for recovering patients. A "Swing Bed" is a transitional patient who requires additional care before returning home. To qualify for "Swing Bed" care, the patient must have a hospital stay of three or more days; admission within 30 days of the hospital stay; a need for skilled nursing, physical, occupational and/or speech therapies; Medicare, private insur-

ance or self pay.

Teton Medical Center services include: 24-hour registered nurse staffing, on-site physical, occupational and speech therapy, on-site lab and radiology departments, in-house pharmacy services, and, transportation services. Typically "Swing Bed" patient care status is used for recovery from illness, injury or surgical procedures in preparation to return home.

If you have questions please contact TMC Discharge Planner Nancy Milewski, R.N., or the Chief Nursing Officer at 466-5763.