

# COMMON CYCLING INJURIES

By : Dr Paul Bell

## DEALING WITH CYCLING INJURIES

Although it is a non-impact sport, cycling can lead to a number of common sporting injuries. Below are some of the more common injuries that cyclists may suffer from.

### Lower back pain

Usually a result of increased pelvic and lower back tightness, or an ill-fitting bike. Aching/pain often builds as the ride progresses, although sometimes pain is only experienced after the ride.

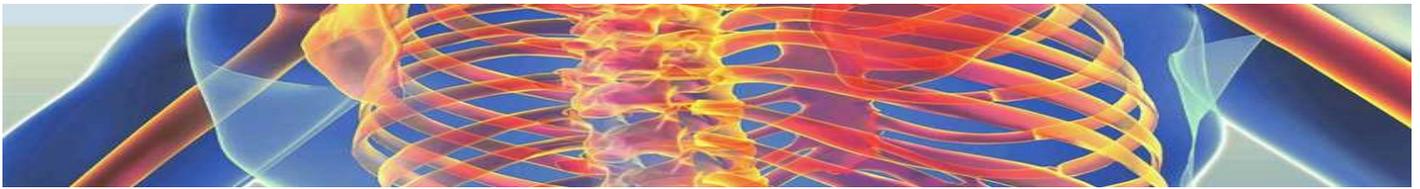
**Action :** Check your bike set-up, if it has been set-up correctly try the following; pelvic and spinal stretching and ideally some lower back stability exercise. Together these can often cure this type of problem.

**Stretches:** Hip flexors, glutei and piriformis, lateral glutei and Ilio-Tibial-Band (ITB).

**Muscles to strengthen are :** Lumbar erector spinae, glutei, transverse abdominus

*“ Although it is a non-impact sport, cycling can lead to a number of common sporting injuries such as Lower back pain, Numb foot, ITB, Anterior Knee Pain and Shoulder and neck pain”*





### Numb foot

Rarely does this problem come from the lower back. Most common causes are, calf tightness (often as a result of over pointing of the toes/forefoot on down phase of peddle action), hip flexor tightness, incorrect shoe or bike set-up.

**Action :**Check your bike set-up and ensure you have the right fitting shoes.

**Stretches:** Calf and hip flexors. **Technique:** Ensure heel remains down throughout peddle phase (i.e. don't point the toes).

### ITB (Ilio-Tibial-Band) syndrome/ Lateral knee pain

Usually a repetitive overuse injury, leading to friction of the ITB as it rubs against the outside of the knee. This gives pain on the lateral (outside) of the knee or pelvis. Pain often occurs later in the ride and/or afterwards. Can be made worse by incorrect fitting of cleats leading to inappropriate rotation through foot and knee.

**Action:** Have cleat position checked to ensure neutral biomechanics of the foot and knee.

**Stretches:** ITB, lateral glutei and hip flexors.

**Technique:** Ensure neutral knee biomechanics throughout peddle phase.

### Anterior knee pain/ Patella pain

Also a repetitive overuse injury, made worse by poor cycling biomechanics, poor technique and muscle imbalance. More common in women due to a different angle of pull on the kneecap compared to men. Leads to pain over the front of the knee/kneecap during cycling and stiffness afterwards.

**Action:** Check cleat position and bike set-up.

**Stretches:** Quads, hamstrings and ITB/ lateral glutei.

**Exercise:** Strengthen medial quad (vastus medialis) and lateral glutei.

**Technique:** Ensure good knee biomechanics throughout peddle phase.

### Shoulder and neck pain

Often a positional strain, especially with increased use of aero-bars and aggressive bike set up position (time trial position) or with rapid increase in amount of cycling. Causes neck and shoulder ache/pain and sometimes numbness in the hands

**Action:** Allow time for the body to adapt to increased riding.

**Stretches:** Trapezius, scalenes and pectorals

**Technique:** Alter riding position if possible whilst cycling (i.e. aero-bars to normal bars)

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