

My legs get sore after running, would sports massage help me?

Muscle soreness after exercise can often be attributed to Delayed Onset Muscle Syndrome (more commonly known as DOMS). This is the body's reaction to strenuous exercise or exercises our body is not accustomed to. It is recognised as a dull soreness in the muscles which begins within 24 hours of the offending exercise session and peaks within 24-72 hours before gradually dissipating over the next -7 days. The most recent evidence puts this pain down to microtrauma (small tearing) within the muscle fibres of the muscle being exercised.



Sports massage delivered by a physiotherapist can relieve the symptoms of DOMS by increasing blood flow to the muscle and can help break down scar tissue. Studies have shown that massage, when combined with other treatments, can improve flexibility and range of movement, and can help inhibit overactive muscles. Massage has been shown to relax athletes and has also been associated with a reduced feeling of fatigue after periods of intense activity.

DOMS can be avoided by gradually increasing the intensity of running. This uses the "repeated-bout effect" which is basically the body "learning" how to deal with a new exercise and thereby reducing negative features such as swelling, pain-induced weakness and reduced joint/muscle range of motion, which are often seen in physiotherapy clinics nationwide.

Massage can be used to reduce pain and improve function, performance and recovery in both healthy and injured athletes. In order to gain the full benefits of massage, it is important to appropriately address the cause of injury or complaint. Therefore, it is important that athletes receive their massage treatment from qualified and experienced chartered physiotherapists.



References

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