Recommendations for TREATMENT OF CALF PAIN IN RUNNERS

Based on Physio Edge podcast 66 with Tom Goom @tomgoom

1 Exercise therapy
   a. Exercises to increase calf capacity
      The quadriceps and gluteal muscles assist the calf with load absorption, strengthening these muscle may reduce the load on the calf complex during running.
   b. Patients with calf pain may present with toe flexor weakness. Isometric strengthening of the toe flexors has been shown to improve plyometric performance.
   c. Identifying the distance or pace the patient can run before onset of symptoms. Use this as the starting point and gradually increase as symptoms allow.
   d. Use short interval training to increase load capacity in runners who experience symptoms when running faster.
   e. Plan training to include a recovery day before a high intensity run to minimise the influence of fatigue.
   f. Runners who are unable to run may need a period of rehabilitation to build load capacity before returning to running.

2 Neural mobility
   a. Treat reduced neural mobility with a combination of spinal mobility exercises, slider/glider exercises +/- manual therapy.
   b. Perform low reps of neural mobility exercises frequently throughout the day.

3 Training loads

4 Gait retraining
   a. Longer ground contact times, large vertical oscillation, rear foot eversion and over striding may increase the load on the calf complex.
   b. Increasing step rate and subtle changes to foot strike may reduce the peak demands on the calf complex.

References