

FITNESS VIEW

BY BONNIE KAYE



The Perfect Massage for Athletes

If you're feeling stressed out, and your muscles seem tight from running, weight training, kicking and punching away the flab before your next trip to the beach, take a break from your fitness routine and get a massage! I went in search of the perfect massage that

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had everything I needed to revitalize my body after a run on the beach in 80 degree Miami heat. I found it at the Ritz Carlton South Beach Hotel & Spa...on their spa menu it's called the "beach body massage"—just a fun way of saying it's recommended for fitness buffs who want get their bodies beach-ready!

I met a delightful massage therapist, Ana Camacho, who said she would tailor a massage specifically designed for me, depending on what was hurting me the most, what my favorite sport was, and what my primary objective was for the day. After I told her I was a runner with a tight back, she said she would incorporate the following three components into our massage session: "Deep tissue, stretching your whole body, and also range of motion, working on your IT-Band for runners." So it's going to be good for you, you're going to love it," Ana stated with confidence, as she motioned for me to lie down. I could hardly wait to get started!

For those of you who are runners, you are probably already painfully aware of the IT-Band, literally, as it is easily injured if you don't



stretch out properly, have poor training techniques, or wear the wrong or worn-down running shoes. Sometimes it gives you problems even if you do everything right just because of the unforgiving biomechanics of running—that's when you break out the ice and ibuprofen. But for those of you who have

no idea what an IT-Band is, and you hear avid runners complaining about theirs, or you feel weird pain in your leg and hip area when you try to run so you stop, this next paragraph is for you!

What IS the IT-Band?

The IT-Band is short for iliotibial band, and in complete layman's terms is strong band of connective fibers that starts at the outer gluteus region, the side of your butt, runs past your hips, thighs and down just below your knee. It has the hugely important job of helping to stabilize your knee, so when it is tight or compromised in any way, you can experience a dull pain on the outside of your knee and lower thigh area when you try to run, climb stairs, or even get out of a car—this means there could be inflammation around your knee and you may have ITBS, iliotibial band syndrome. If you don't seek treatment, the pain will go from dull to sharp—see a sports medicine specialist for an evaluation, especially if the basic "RICE" principles are ineffective (rest, ice, compression, elevation—

plus ibuprofen...what are we going to do with that extra "I"?)

The Pre-Massage Warm-Up

One of the best features about this massage was that Ana warmed up my muscles first, even before we even started, by gently shaking and moving my legs around to get the blood flowing, just like you'd warm-up your muscles before going for a run.

"How does it feel?" Ana asked. The smile on my face said it all. I could tell I was in good hands, as she proceeded with caution—a good strategy when working on a runner who has a tight back, hamstrings and a super tight IT-Band.

Partner Assisted Stretches

We began with a series of partner-assisted stretches to improve my range of motion and flexibility, including stretches to specifically target to loosen up my tight IT-Band. One side was much tighter than the other, as with most people. Ana continued to talk me through the stretches—the sign of a good therapist: "This stretching not only stretches out muscles in your lower back but muscles along the IT-Band, muscles that compromise your lower back."

We worked through much of my tightness in ways I could not possibly have done on my own, which is why you should always get a training partner to help you with stretching—a win-win situation. Finally it was time for the deep tissue

portion of the massage—we decided to work on my thighs and my back, and get out all of the knots and kinks. At the very end I was treated to more Swedish-style strokes, nice and relaxing, where I was able to reflect for a moment and think of nothing—except maybe what I was going to have for lunch in the pool...after a quick dip in the Jacuzzi where my green tea that was waiting for me in the next room; then back to the beach—refreshed, revitalized, and ready for my next adventure!

Need to Know More?

To reach Ana Camacho, massage therapist at The Ritz Carlton South Beach Hotel in Miami, Florida go to: www.ritzcarlton.com For more info on the IT-Band and ITBS go to: www.runnersworld.com

For another good article on the IT-Band I recommend this site:

www.rice.edu/~jenky/sports/itband.v2.html For articles on the Top 5 Runner's Injuries, including the IT-Band: www.time-to-run.com.

You can always email me at: insidefitness@aol.com and visit my website at www.insidefitness.com to read this and other Brooklyn View articles I've written, and view video clips of stories when available.

If you have a question you'd like answered in the paper, please email my editor at [The Brooklyn View at: thebrooklynview@yahoo.com](mailto:thebrooklynview@yahoo.com) Attention: Bonnie Kaye Fitness Expert.

Best of luck!
Bonnie

TIPS FOR STAYING COOL

What strategies can runners use to avoid problems on hot days? Here are some training tips for proper hydration:

- 1. Drink before running.** Drink adequately and drink often up until two hours before the start. Excess body water will be passed as urine before you start to run. Two hours before, however, stop drinking otherwise you'll be ducking into the bushes.
- 2. Drink while you run.** Just before the gun sounds, you can start drinking again. Once you're moving, you'll sweat off any excess liquid before it reaches your kidneys. You also need to drink frequently while training, especially during warm weather. You'll run faster and recover sooner. Carry a water bottle if necessary.
- 3. Walk to drink.** Don't try to gulp it down while running through the aid stations. You'll be able to drink more if you stop or at least walk. You'll lose less time than you think. I once ran a 2:29 marathon walking through every aid station on a hot day.
- 4. Drink after running.** Drink as soon as you stop, but even after your initial thirst is quenched, you still need to keep drinking. One sign of your hydration level is to check your urine. Clear urine is a sign of good hydration.
- 5. Don't overestimate your ability.** Realize that you can't run as fast when it's warm. Don't expect to set a Personal Record, and don't be afraid to bail out early (at least start slowing down) when you're starting to overheat.

(Source: <http://www.halhgdon.com/books/Marabook/Marabook1.htm>)