

# Are your feet a **pain** in the neck?

THERE IS SOME truth to the old saying “when your feet hurt you hurt all over.” Aching feet, knee pain, a stiff back or a pain in the neck can often originate from abnormal foot biomechanics.

Most people have experienced a shaking steering wheel when a car tire is out of alignment. It’s very similar with the human body, when your foot arches weaken and “fall”, your knees may “knock” your disks can “slip”, your shoulders might “slump in” and you may cry “my neck is killing me.” It is interesting to note, that most people who have imperfect feet do not initially have foot pain; instead they suffer from multiple body discomforts that are subsequently traced back to poor foot mechanics.

The most common mechanical foot problem is pronation. Pronation is also known as flat feet or fallen arches. Due to varied factors such as: genetics, weight, pregnancy, age and disease the arch can suffer loss of structure or strength which gradually causes a partial or full collapse of the arch. This condition often leaves the patient with a myriad of direct and associated pain issues. It is important to note, that in cases of complete neglect or lifelong under treatment of moderate to severe flat feet; that most people will develop, at or around the age of fifty, tendon “wear-out”. In this very common, preventable scenario a serious operation becomes necessary, accompanied by many months of recovery, resulting in a repaired foot that never really will be the same again. This situation could most likely be avoided had these people had orthotics early on in life.



In an effort, to illustrate how significant the need for orthotics are in the general population I will draw a comparison between foot pronation and poor vision. It is critical with eyesight to see well; hence the prevalence of corrective glasses. There are wide variations such as 20-30 or 20-500; with the goal being to comfortably read without stress, strain or headaches. Similarly, people desire to comfortably stand, walk, and run without aches, pains, inflammation and tightness. Under most circumstances our feet perform well, but under stress such as: athletics, long periods of standing or walking etc., the accumulation of stress can become unbearable. A well designed orthotic can provide the needed support to counter the effects of moderate to severe foot fatigue.

Who can benefit from orthotics? I firmly believe from years of professional experience that most, if not all, arthritic and diabetic sufferers can significantly benefit from the use of a special “soft cover” custom orthotic. It goes without saying

that many serious or professional athletes should be fitted, as well as, anyone with pronation. Additionally, orthotics with unique accommodations can be designed that will remediate or even stop the build-up of painful calluses.

Who can you trust to make a “precise” orthotic? A custom orthotic by definition is not one size or type fits all. Many orthotic choices exist in the market place: doctor designed, off-the-shelf or tech produced. When all is said and done the patient’s unique medical needs must be measured into



the design. If not, the orthotic will fail. In my practice, making a custom orthotic is not just a function of casting a foot. It is imperative to take a detailed patient history that includes: a careful examination of the feet, an analyses of active walking gait, specific questions that determine the type/level of activities that are being performed and the type/level of foot/body pain that are being felt. In order to achieve maximum success an experienced podiatrist should evaluate the foot, cast the mold, directly order the device and oversee the final fitting.



In cases where the patient demands the "Ultimate in Comfort" I have a personal relationship with a custom shoe fabricator who will not only design a shoe to your aesthetic desires but will also incorporate my precise orthotic corrections directly into the original design of the shoe. These customs shoes are currently being worn by celebrities, movie stars, and our current governor.



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