

CONDITIONS WE TREAT – FOOT CONDITIONS

FOOT PAIN

Foot pain is a common disorder that affects many millions of Americans. Generally speaking foot pain is brought about by many different mechanisms. Discrete injury, faulty biomechanics, cramped footwear (wearing cramped, tight, pointy high heel shoes over extended periods of time), differences in leg length, pronation and other abnormalities that effect the overall functioning of the foot or distorts foot shape brings about foot pain and arthritic changes. The commonest form of foot problems seen are caused by pronation. This is a foot disturbance in which the ankle rolls inward allowing for complete or partial loss of the arch.



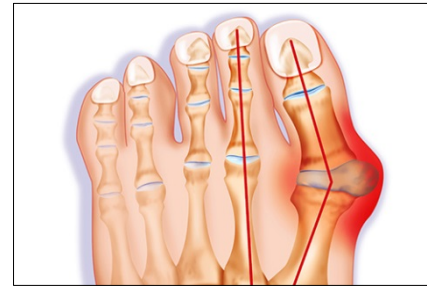
Such a loss of arch creates a rolling gait when walking. When our heel touches down in walking the heel and foot are in a neutral position. As one follows through to the mid-stance phase, where weight is fully atop the foot, the ankle tends to roll inward in pronation creating a pivotal shift of the weight bearing of the upper body onto the rolled over or pronated ankle. This action not only strains the ankle but also the joints and tissues of every other area of the foot, leg, hip and back. Admittedly this strain can be subtle. As with all biomechanical strains it may take weeks, months or years to produce serious pain and physical limitation. Where pain will arise depends on the given individual. Pain may strike the hip, shin or back. Painful areas will eventually break down and become arthritic.

Obviously, in the runner or high performance athlete such pronation cannot be tolerated for long and is often the reason that runners become lame and lose their ability to function properly or do the mileage they like to do. Abnormal foot positions, pronation, and cramped foot ware will also lead to other problems. Hammer toes, bunions, bunionettes, metatarsalgia, calluses, Achilles tendon damage, hammer toe, Morton's neuroma and other conditions will result.

It is important to have a good biomechanical examination when one has foot or other leg complaints. Adapting high quality orthotics (shoe inserts) to rebalance the foot coupled with rehabilitational exercises and therapy, is an excellent means to alleviate these kinds of disturbances and reduce pain and stress upon the spine. We will be happy to evaluate you for structural problems of the spine, feet and lower extremities.

BUNIONS

Many people are told by their medical physicians that bunions are hereditary. However it would be more accurate to say that the way we stand or balance our ankles and feet is hereditary. Due to postural problems with in-turning of the ankle, we develop bunions overtime. Actually bunions refer to the large and painfully swollen joints that develop where the large toe meets the foot. A bunionette refers to the same condition on the small toe.



The mechanics of bunion development are simple to understand and simple to correct. Inward turning of the foot (pronation), allows for excessive ground pressure on the large toe joint. At the same time the toe, due to this pressure, tends to deviate over toward the small toe. Over time the joint becomes progressively inflamed, swollen, arthritic and enlarged. Prescription orthotics or shoe inserts can correct the in-rolling of the ankle, reduce pressure on the swollen joint and allow the area to normalize. While wearing orthotics may become a permanent addition to your footwear, proper orthotics will prevent the progression of the bunion and the need for eventual surgery. Walking correctly will not only save wear on your feet but will reduce stress to the back as well. The chiropractic orthopedist prescribes orthotics to stabilize the lower back and correct mechanical problems of the lower extremities.

In our office we use podiatric grade orthotics which are formed from an individual plaster mold of the patient's foot. This is the old fashioned method of making orthotics and in my opinion still the best method.

SHOE ORTHOTICS

Our office is somewhat different than other offices. Dr. Hargis is a Board Certified Chiropractic Orthopedist, with nine years of post-graduate training in the diagnosis and care of spinal, muscular and joint conditions. One of our specialties is the formulation of orthotics for foot conditions, shin splints, knee problems and to relieve stress to the back. We have podiatric grade orthotics made for a variety of foot conditions. This includes pronation, heel spurs, bursitis, metatarsalgia, longitudinal or mid arch strains, plantar fasciitis, shin splints, foot supination, bunions, bunionettes, hammer toes, Morton's neuroma, unequal leg length, and a variety of other conditions.

We treat children, adults, and seniors. In many cases we can obtain podiatric grade orthotics for our patients at a more reasonable rates than you could possibly find elsewhere.

Orthotics not only helps the feet but stabilizes the lower back and corrects mechanical problems of the lower extremities. In our office we make an individual plaster mold of the patient's foot. This is the old fashioned method of making orthotics and in my opinion still the best method.