

Corrective Foot and Ankle Active Care

Your feet and ankles are not just stumps at the bottom of your legs. They have an important responsibility to provide you with the ability to walk around, bear the load of your entire body weight, and offer a variety of recreation possibilities. Returning to functional foot and ankle use and reduction of pain requires your ongoing attention. Foot and ankle dysfunction (misalignment, stress, strain, improper stance, lack of activity, poor footwear choices) contributes to low back and hip pain, leg and knee pain, as well as degenerative changes in leg joints.

1. Footwear- Wear a variety of shoes from day to day.

- Don't buy shoes based on the 'size' label, try-on shoes larger than your usual size.
- Your toes should be able to wiggle freely inside the toe-box, especially the big toe.
- Tie the laces in the center of the instep. If you can't, then your low back and hamstrings are very tight.
- Don't wear flip-flops, sandals, slides, slip-ins or high heels.
- Walk in sock-feet or barefoot everyday.
- If seated for more than 1 hour, remove shoes (or loosen the laces) and mobilize your feet and ankles.
- IMPORTANT: soles must be: hard, flat, have a 90° at the sole-side of the shoe all the way around
- IMPORTANT: wear lace-up leather shoes, not fabric that stretches, or synthetic materials.

2. Standing- If more than 1 hour, take a break and walk in bare feet or sock feet for a few minutes.

- Shift your weight from leg to leg, wiggle toes inside your shoe, pump-up your arches.
- Never stand around in flip-flops or heels. Flip-flops are not a sensible daily footwear choice.

3. Sitting- Don't cross your legs, doing so impedes blood supply and irritates the nerves to the leg and foot.

- If seated more than 1 hour, take off your shoes and mobilize your feet and ankles.
- At home, elevate your feet above the heart for a 20-40 minutes
- Use a vibrating hot foot bath with disinfecting essential oils.

4. Care- Keep feet dry, clean, scrubbed (especially between toes), nails trimmed.

- Walk in grass and sand, let your feet get sunshine.
- Keep track of changes in foot odor, skin color, bulging veins, weakness, numbness, tingling.

5. Activities- Don't imprison your feet in a hot, wet, dark, cramped shoe all day.

- STANCE- is the neutral position of the ankle mortise joint with a raised muscular arch.
 - Soft knees, ankles probably rolled outward slightly, feet pointing forward, pelvis tucked.
 - STACK and un-stack the ankles to find neutral, then step slowly thru neutral.
- LOCOMOTION- walk thru the STANCE heel-toe and toe-heel, step sideways, walk in a circle.
- GLIDES- A. Tuck toes under with mild over pressure, then straighten toes against the floor
 - B. Flex toes by lifting up and forward, then try to press toes against the floor
 - C. Stand on balls of feet while drawing heel circles clock/counter wise
 - D. Fan toes apart, curl crunch, individual toes raises
- SHORT FOOT- Reach toes, pin toes to floor, drag toes while pumping arch, keep 3-point contacts
- Don't run or jog regularly on concrete or pavement, however walking is OK.

6. SYMPTOM relief-

- Ice (ice bath or cold pack) for: inflammation, redness, swollen, pain from recent injury (past 3 days)
- Heat (hot pack or infrared) for achy, tired (un-swollen, not-red) crampy symptoms
- Biofreeze if the area is preventing you from walking around comfortably (Ask the doctor first)
- Tennis ball rolling on the foot bed (don't use a hard ball) or massage by hand
- Elevate legs and pump the foot and calf muscles
- Anti-Inflammatory Diet (AILHD) solves most of the symptom problems
- Don't sit still: either sit and mobilize joints, or go for a walk.
- Call the Doctor Dean's Office 310-663-8602