

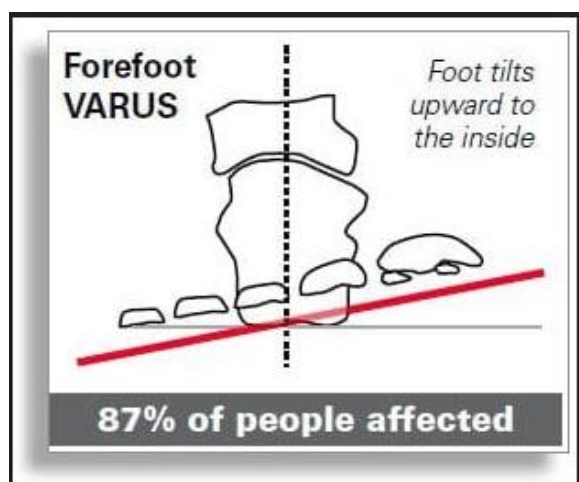
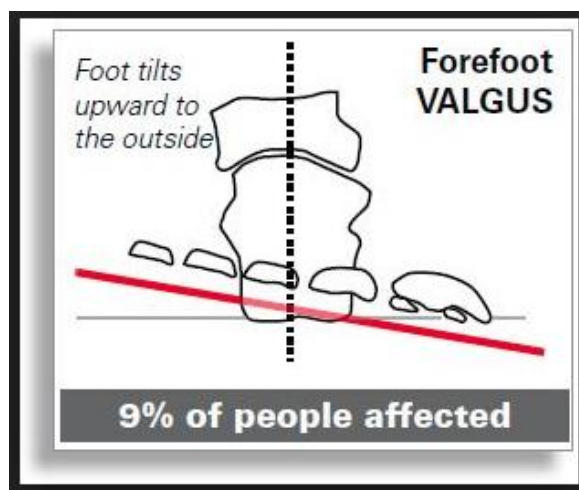
## BIKE FITTERS GONE WRONG

This article is in response to numerous questions I have received about this posting found in a bike fitting chat group. This posting is shown to the right and the photo is of a male cyclist's right foot.

If you read this post, there are 3 things stated, (a) the client complains of outside arch pain, (b) client's right forefoot is 29° Varus, (c) the fitter is going to fix this with a heel wedge.

Before we go any further, we need to define VALGUS and VARUS ... in this case forefoot VALGUS and forefoot VARUS.

The 2 images below are courtesy of bikefit.com and perfectly describe forefoot VALGUS and forefoot VARUS.

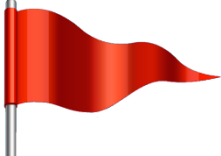
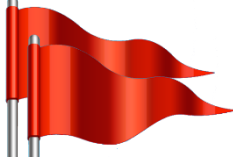
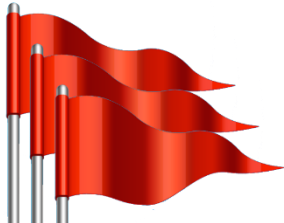
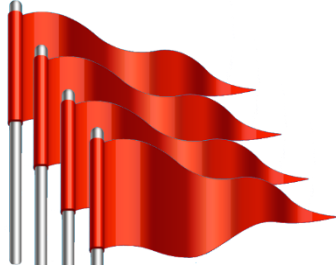


*So here is my challenge of the week. Client complained of outside of foot pain (really??!!) and numbness in the toes. Varus of 29 degrees and first time in a few months I needed to break out the heel wedges.*



# BEWARE OF THE FITTER WHO ...

Here's my take on this.

	Number of Red Flags :
1) If you haven't noticed, in the photo, the bike fitter states "VARUS of 29 degrees." Actually, this forefoot is <b>VALGUS, NOT VARUS</b> . Either this fitter (a) never attended a bike fitting class, (b) didn't listen in the class he attended, (c) doesn't understand the difference between Valgus and Varus or (d) the instructor never taught this. In any way you look at it, <b><u>this is a fitter to stay away from.</u></b>	
2) He then states, "I need to break out the heel wedges." If you will notice, there is very little VALGUS heel tilt, so why try to fix something that isn't "broken?" In reality, he should be looking at the forefoot, since potentially fixing this will automatically straighten out the heel.	
3) This fitter should also be aware that a 29° VALGUS forefoot is an extreme case and he shouldn't try to fix (treat) this himself. How he would try and fix this is to place a large number of wedges between the cleat and shoe which will greatly impact the alignment and tracking of the knee - forcing the knee outwards.	
4) What I and any other competent fitter would do is (a) know that this is an extreme condition that would more than likely cause the cyclist more harm if we would try and fix this, (b) recommend to this cyclist to go and see a physical therapist who is medically certified to recommend and perform a corrective course of action and (c) discuss with the cyclist that this will be a 2-part fit – first part to complete physical therapy, and, once medically cleared, come back to get the rest of the bike fit. Of course, I would have a discussion with the physical therapist to discuss the bike fit and see if there are any limitations that I need to be aware of. I would never try and treat someone with an extreme condition like this bike fitter is doing.	

The sad thing is that this bike fitter probably thinks he is doing the right thing. In reality, he will be hurting this cyclist much more than helping them.

Again, this is a great example of "buyer beware." This is also a great example of why it is so important for you to ask questions, and if something doesn't sound right, run away.

## QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR (POTENTIAL) FITTER

- 1) **What is your background?**
- 2) **What are your qualifications/certifications?**
- 3) **How long have you been bike fitting?**
- 4) **Any references, testimonials?**
- 5) **Do you ride, do you train?**

- 6) Have you built any bikes? How many? Do you use a torque wrench?
- 7) Do you fit for local teams or groups?
- 8) What is your fitting philosophy? What is your bike fitting process?
- 9) Which bike fit system will I be fit on?
- 10) What is your pricing?
- 11) If I don't like the fit/how it feels, do you have a warranty or another plan of action?
- 12) What other services do you offer?
- 13) What are other potential "add-ons?"
- 14) Which brands do you like, which brands do you carry?
- 15) Have you published or written any [bike fitting] papers or articles in any related publications?
- 16) Will the bike fit be documented?
- 17) How experienced are you at correctly fitting cleats?
- 18) How will you correct my knees from going out at the top to tracking straight up and down?
- 19) What are your thoughts on wedges?
- 20) What are your thoughts on shims?
- 21) Are they knowledgeable with respect to insoles, arch supports, shoes, cleats, etc.?
- 22) Do they measure your power output at each step of the fit process?
- 23) Do they hold a detailed client interview with you?
- 24) Do they hold a pre-fit mini-physical evaluation?
- 25) After the bike fit, will you document the bike's new dimensions? Will I get to keep this information?
- 26) What is VALGUS? What is VARUS