

Orthopaedic Connection

When Your Feet Hurt . . .

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Everyone has heard or said, "when your feet hurt, you hurt all over". I'm not sure about all over, but it can cause increased pain in already ouchy areas such as the knee, hip and even the back.

Last week we talked mostly about orthotics. The two types are off the shelf or custom orthotics.

Off the shelf orthotics are not cheap, but if you want to try them first, I would have no objection. I often recommend them if I think they are what that person's particular problem requires. Often you can reduce pain by changing the angle of your foot only slightly.

However, many of my patients need orthoses that are tailor made for the problem I have diagnosed. In addition, patients may require a specifically designed orthosis for one foot and a different design for the other. Can you see why off the shelf supports don't often help?

I only prescribe the orthotic for you. I don't sell it to you.

The orthotist makes and sells the orthotics based on my prescription. The orthotist builds the inserts based on molds of the feet incorporating modifications needed to correct your specific problem. Sometimes the orthotist needs to make modifications of the orthotics after they are initially made.

Shoes

I recommend patients use their orthotics with lace up shoes. You might need new shoes that are big enough and have enough depth to accommodate the new orthotics. However you refer to them, tennis shoes, sneakers, or athletic shoes are best because they have a broad surface and they are wider in the toe box and heels. You can adjust tightness by tying the shoe to give more control and security.

Arch Support is the Key

This is true whether you have a normal foot, high arch or flat foot. High arches need the foot to sole space filled in. Flat feet need support to optimally position the feet. I hope all you flip flop and flimsy sandal wearers have normal feet. Do you remember when flip-flops were only worn at the beach or pool? When did they become shoes? I see young

people wearing them when there is snow and ice on the ground! They definitely have taken over. I wonder if anyone would notice if I wore them in the office?

If you are having any foot problems or will wear the shoes with orthotics it is best to have your feet measured correctly. Ah, by the way your foot size changes over time so don't assume it has not changed over years. Shoes fit differently from one manufacturer to another too.

Look for cushioning especially in the heel and a wide enough toe box. Squared or rounded toe is best. Buy sturdy. Bend the shoe from toe to heel and look for one that is fairly stiff.

Well, there you have it. Remember your feet each have 26 bones! So be nice to them and if you are having trouble with them have them checked and helped. Your knees, hips and back are hoping you do take care of your feet.

For more information about foot problems and all the other things I treat in the office and hospital log on to www.orthopodsurgeon.com, which can take you to Your Orthopaedic Connection.

Good health. Good life. All the best to you.

Be well.

Dr. Haverbush