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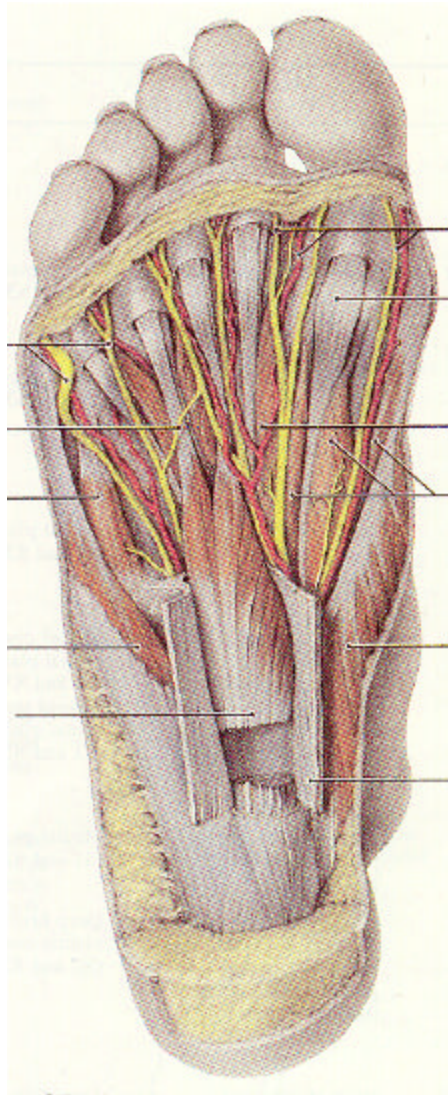
"treating the cause of your problem, not just the symptoms"

Trendy Flip Flops Harmful to Feet

You may have noticed that many of the fashion models are wearing flip-flops. Now it is not uncommon to see the average women wearing them leisurely or even at work. However, this fashion statement is causing problems. The Province newspaper even printed an article on this where they are quoting healthcare practitioners as saying "flip-flops have gone from the boardwalk to the sidewalk" and that "doctors are flipping out over flip-flops". The paper also reported that "there has been a "15% rise in flip-flop related injuries". I don't know how accurate this statistic is since I doubt that anyone actually keeps track of how often someone experiences a flip-flop injury. However, I do agree that wearing flip-flops regularly and for long periods of time can cause problems. As a chiropractor, I agree with other physiotherapists and podiatrists that this is becoming a definite problem.

Most of the flip-flops that can be purchased today have only one strap across the top of the foot. These shoes have no real support for the bottom or sides of the foot. With no support on the sides, the foot can easily slide off of the edge of the sandal making an ankle sprain much more likely. This is particularly true if the flip-flop has a thick or high sole. With no support on the bottom of the foot, the arches of the feet can become stressed. This is particularly true if the person has "fallen arches" to begin with. Furthermore, unsupported arches of the feet can negatively alter how the foot, ankle, and knee work. This inevitably leads to plantar fasciitis, knee pain, and possibly even lower back pain. If you must wear these trendy flip-flops, don't wear them for too long at one time. Definitely do not walk for long distances while wearing them.

Another problem with wearing flip-flops is that there is that the single passes between the first and second toes before attaching to the sole. The foot is not designed to have a strap jammed between the toes while walking or standing. This constant pressure may irritate the small nerves that travel along each side of each toe. Please refer to the diagram from Moore's Anatomy, third edition, that is shown below. This may cause numbness of the toes directly next to where the strap inserts.



The easiest way to solve the increasing frequency of flip-flop injuries is to not wear them at all. Try that one on your teenage daughter who thinks they are the most fashionable and comfortable summer footwear possible. To compromise, try to not wear them for too long at one time and definitely not when walking long distances. If you think you are experiencing some of these symptoms or have already sprained your ankle and you would like it examined, feel free to contact our office.