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

Custom Orthotics Only Please!

Your feet are the foundation of your entire body. They must withstand pressures every day of two to three times your body weight as you move. Just like the concrete foundation of your home has to hold the weight of the entire house, your feet have to hold up your entire body weight. If the foundation of your home begins to shift or can no longer hold the weight, your house begins to show physical changes or signs of "settling" all the way up to the roof. The same scenario occurs in your feet. There are 52 bones, 36 joints, and lots of ligaments in your feet. If the ligaments become "stretched" or the joints become "rigid or stiff", your foot can no longer efficiently resist the daily forces that are applied to them. Over time, this leads to the breakdown (arthritis) of the joints in the feet, microscopic tearing of the ligaments (plantar fasciitis), and fatigue of the foot muscles. If you are experiencing these problems, you may find yourself suffering after walking or standing for even short periods of time. As well, you might feel sharp pain at the bottom of your feet as soon as you get out of bed in the morning. However, this is not the end of your potential problems. When your feet are settling or changing structurally (most commonly seen as "fallen or flattened arches"), other areas of your body can be dramatically affected. Changes in your feet can cause pain in your knees and shins. Particularly if one foot changes more than the other, pain can also show up in your hips, pelvis, and low back. In dramatic cases, changes in your feet can lead to postural alterations in your spine that can cause problems up as high as your neck, usually showing up as neck stiffness and muscle tension headaches.

If the above problems sound like you, then you may wish to consider being fitted for a pair of "custom orthotics". A quality pair of "custom orthotics" is made specifically for your feet. It is highly unlikely that any two people should have identical feet and therefore identical orthotics. In fact, it is not uncommon for you to need a different shape of orthotic for your left versus your right foot. Many different types of "off the shelf" orthotics are available, but they are not made specifically for you and your problems. To ensure that you do not make your foot problems even worse, only wear orthotics that is "custom made" for each of your feet.

To make a “*custom orthotic*”, the practitioner must first examine the feet thoroughly. Then, a foam or plaster mold of each foot is made. This must be done in a “*neutral and non-weight bearing*” position. This means that the practitioner aligns your foot and ankle in the position it should be, and then makes the mold. Most importantly, this is done when you are in a seated position! If you are standing and step into the foam or plaster to make an impression or mold, the technique being used is not as accurate. For example, when you are standing to make the mold or impression, the result will only show what your foot is already doing wrong. Then the practitioner must “guess” what position your foot should actually be in when he or she makes your orthotic. If the practitioner is using a mold or impression taken from on a non-weight bearing and properly aligned foot, there is no guessing and each orthotic is made specifically for each of your feet.

It is also important to ask the practitioner if there is some kind of guarantee and warrantee with the finished product. Sometimes, the orthotic may require an adjustment in the initial thirty days or so to achieve a good fit. This is often done without a charge. As well, if the orthotics cannot be adjusted or fitted to your desire, a partial or full money back guarantee should be available within the first month of using them. When I make a pair of custom orthotics for someone, any necessary adjustments for the first thirty days are free. Even after the thirty days, most adjustments are free or very inexpensive. I also have a no-hassle guarantee with all the custom orthotics I make. If you are just not happy with your orthotics and you talk to me about it within a month of receiving them, you will be refunded 100% of your money.

In closing, do not use imitation or inaccurately made orthotics. Now that you know why, you may want to reconsider purchasing that \$300.00 pair of quickly and cheaply made pair of orthotics at the next home show in Merritt. On a separate note, if you anticipate being fitted for custom orthotics, extended health plans often cover 80% of the cost up to \$300.00.