

Dr. Colin Gage * Dr. Duane Drobot

Nicola Valley Chiropractic
2076 Granite Ave.
P.O. Box 909
Merritt, BC
V1K 1B8

Ph: (250) 378-5456
Fax: (250) 378-8259
Email: info@merrittchiro.com
Website: www.merrittchiro.com

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

Correcting Flat Feet (pronation)

Foot pronation--inward tilting of the ankles and flattening of the arches--is a normal part of walking and running. But when it's excessive, it can lead to foot, ankle, or even knee pain. Don't be fooled, even though people's arches may be relatively high when they lie down or sit, there can be overpronation or flattening when they stand.

A certain amount of pronation is normal. During the walking or running, the heel strikes the ground and the foot rolls inward to absorb shock and adapt to the surface. This is particularly important if the surface is uneven. However, just before the foot pushes off, it should become a rigid lever as the arch rises and the ankle straightens. If instead the arch remains flattened and the ankle stays tilted inward, muscles and tendons will be stressed and the foot will undergo excessive wear and tear.

Overpronation can contribute to other painful conditions of the foot, leg, and knee, including overstretching of the band that extends from the heel to the ball of the foot (plantar fasciitis), enlarged and arthritic toe joints (bunions), pinching of nerves in the forefoot (Morton's neuroma), calluses, runner's knee (patellofemoral syndrome), and "shin splints."

A pronated foot structure is often inherited. Before children reach the age of 3 or 4, however, it is normal for their feet to appear fairly flat because of a fat pad under the arch. After that age, the fat pad should be outgrown and the feet should be stable; only then does inward tilting of the foot and ankle bones become evident.

If left untreated, overpronation can cause problems that persist into adulthood. Regardless of a person's age, correcting foot mechanics can help relieve pain. Arch supports that are available in drugstores and sporting goods stores may reduce excessive pronation to a degree and provide enough support or temporary comfort to be helpful for some patients. However, in most cases, off-the-shelf devices or shoes are not specific enough to precisely control overpronation, and custom orthotics is needed. This is precisely what I use with my patients.

If you are having problems with your feet, legs, or knees that may be related to your foot structure, it's important to see a qualified health care practitioner (such as a

chiropractor) for a thorough evaluation. If you find out that your feet overpronate, orthotics that provide proper foot correction could help keep you moving freely for many years to come.

To give you an idea of how much these cost, in my office a proper examination, foam impression, and having a pair of custom orthotics made specifically for you is typically less than \$300.00. As well, this amount is generally 80% or more covered by most extended health plans. If you have any further questions about orthotics, please do not hesitate to contact me at my office.