

Dr. Colin Gage

Nicola Valley Chiropractic
2076A 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"

All Feet Are Not Created Equal

Did you know that there are 52 bones, 36 joints, and lots of ligaments in your feet? Why is this significant? Well, 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 house, it has to hold the weight of the entire house. If the foundation begins to shift or can no longer hold the weight, the house begins to show physical changes or signs of “settling” all the way up to the roof. The same scenario occurs in your feet. If the ligaments become “stretched” or the joints become “rigid or stiff”, the foot can no longer hold the daily forces that are applied to them. Over time, this leads to the breakdown (arthritis) of the joints of the feet, microscopic tearing of the ligaments (plantar fasciitis), and fatigue of the foot muscles. People who are experiencing these problems find it difficult to stand or walk for even short periods of time. But this is not the end of their problems. When the feet are settling or changing structurally (most commonly seen as “fallen or flattened arches”), other areas of the body can be dramatically affected. Changes in the feet often cause pain in the knees and shins. Particularly if one foot changes more than the other, pain can also show up in the hips, pelvis, and low back. In dramatic cases, changes in the feet can lead to postural alterations in the spine that can cause problems up as high as the neck, usually showing up as neck stiffness and muscle tension headaches.

In my office I recently came across a patient that appeared to have simple mechanical low back pain. With Chiropractic treatment, he demonstrated great improvement in mobility and the pain disappeared. But within three weeks, the pain in the low back began to creep back. This happened a couple times before I decided to look for other possible causes. I asked him about his feet. When he removed his shoes and socks, the left foot had a dramatically fallen or flattened arch. When he stood and I looked from behind, the left fallen arch made his left hip, pelvis, and lower back drop slightly. Not to my surprise, this was the same side of the low back that always became sore. It was then apparent that to correct the mechanics of his feet, he needed “custom orthotics”. To do this, I produced a “foam cast” of his foot while it was in a neutral, non-weight-bearing position. In simple terms, this means that I made a foam cast of his foot while he was sitting down so that the arch and joints of the foot were in their proper position and not flattened. Plastic orthotics are only millimeters thick and easily fit into most shoes. They were made to specifically for his feet and gave his feet the structural

support they needed. As long as he wore the orthotics, the arches of the feet were maintained in their proper position and the postural changes in his low back were eliminated. As I expected, the pain in his low back soon disappeared!

Custom orthotics are not cheap. They typically cost just over \$300 but 80% of that cost is almost always reimbursed by your private health insurance if you have it. The structural component of the orthotic that I use is guaranteed for life against breakage and the foam cover glued onto them for comfort can be fully replaced for a \$25 lab fee. If you have any further questions on how custom orthotics can help you feel and function better, feel free to call me directly.