That Pain in Your Back Could be Linked to Your Feet, Arch Madness

If your lower back has been hurting, and you do not remember doing anything to injure it, the source of your pain could be your feet. Foot pain is something that many people try to ignore. After all, doesn't everyone's feet hurt now and then? But
if foot pain is something that has been with you for quite a while, it could be causing problems in your ankles, knees, hips and even your back.

That old song, “The leg bone’s connected to the thigh bone. The thigh bone’s connected to the hip bone...,” tells the whole story. Our bodies are like a chain, with one link—or bone—connecting at the joint to another link. Think about what would happen if the first link in the chain was out of position. The point at which it meets the next link would eventually overstress that link and adversely affect the entire chain.

That is what happens when we have foot pain. If the normal way of walking is painful, we instinctively change our walking pattern. Say you have arthritis and your big toe joint hurts, so you change your gait to avoid bending the joint when you walk. Changing your gait changes the mechanics of your ankle joint, eventually causing ankle pain. This change in your walking pattern can also affect the whole chain of your lower body from the ankle, to the knee, to the hip and then to the lower back.

When foot pain or a foot deformity causes you to change the way you walk, it changes the way the bones of all those other joints move with each other. Cartilage in the joints can wear down, ligaments and tendons can be stressed beyond their normal range and arthritis can set in.

If your feet or ankles are not working right, do not ignore them. Contact a foot and ankle surgeon for an evaluation. Your back (and knees and hips) will thank you!

**Orthotics**

A foot pad or heel insert purchased at your podiatrist office is an orthotic device. So is a custom-molded, individually designed shoe insert or ankle brace. Orthotic devices like these are frequently used to treat various conditions of the foot and ankle. They are often very effective in relieving common complaints.

**Uses**

Orthotic devices may be recommended for several reasons, including:

- aligning and supporting the foot or ankle
- preventing, correcting or accommodating foot deformities
- improving the overall function of the foot or ankle

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For example, a wedge inserted into the inner (medial) side of the sole of a shoe can be used to help support a flatfoot, thus reducing the risk of tendinitis. An ankle-foot brace can help relieve the pain of rheumatoid arthritis in the heel or ankle. A heel flare can be used to increase support and help prevent ankle sprains. Heel cushions can help absorb impact and relieve stress on the heel and ankle when you walk or run.

Although custom orthoses are considerably more expensive than off-the-shelf devices, they last much longer and provide more support or correction. In some cases, however, an over-the-counter device can be just as effective, particularly when combined with a stretching and exercise program.

In the past, plaster molds of the foot were used to construct the custom-made orthosis. Now, digital orthotic scanning is used to develop orthoses that more accurately reflect the dynamics of your gait.

**DO ORTHOTICS WORK?**

It depends on the problem. Orthotics can be of benefit in changing the pressure on certain parts of the foot and thus relieving symptoms. This is especially true in diabetics and other individuals who are at risk for skin breakdown. Certain ankle braces are good at controlling motion and can help to unload an arthritic joint. The result can be pain relief for patients who are unable or unwilling to undergo surgical correction.

Consult your podiatrist before buying or using an orthotic device on your own; if you select the wrong type of device, you could change the mechanics of your gait and cause problems instead of curing them.

**Don’t Live Life in Pain!**

**Current blogs on our website:**

**Topic:** Winter Olympics & Your Feet

**This offer good thru March 31, 2018**

**Didn’t 2018 just arrive?**

**Where is the time going?**

We have had the pleasure of taking lunch to Dr. Kassicieh’s office in the South Valley and to El Pueblo Health Care in Bernalillo. This is always a good opportunity for their doctors and staff to learn about our services and ask any questions they have that will ultimately help their patients.

We were also invited to Kindred at Home to meet with their staff of nurses and case managers to talk about balance bracing for their clients that have balance issues, as well as, any other foot and ankle issues they have encountered.

If your organization would benefit from a visit please get in contact with us so that we can discuss your needs and talk about making that happen.

It is our privilege to educate our community about foot and ankle health.

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**OUR DOCTORS**

Dr. Nathan Ivey

Dr. Jonathan Williamson

Dr. Justin Ward

Dr. Mark Tenny

DOCTORS OF PODIATRIC MEDICINE (DPM) ARE PODIATRY PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS, ALSO KNOWN AS PODIATRISTS, QUALIFIED BY THEIR EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND EXPERIENCE TO DIAGNOSE AND TREAT CONDITIONS AFFECTING THE FOOT, ANKLE, AND RELATED STRUCTURES OF THE LEG.

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