

Winning the Race with Orthotics

Last week we started to dispel the myth that orthotics are just for senior citizens. Don't get me wrong – orthotics can certainly help seniors to improve their balance and foot comfort – but they can also help athletes!

For athletes, constantly improving their function and form is crucial to achieve winning results. In cases where an athlete or highly active individual has an abnormal walking or "gait" pattern, orthotics may provide assistance.

Custom foot orthotics are constructed specially for the individual's foot. The orthotic will be created to precisely fit the foot – from heel to toe – to help redistribute pressures and forces acting on the entire foot. Athletes use foot orthotics to help improve performance, sensory feedback, muscle function, and reduce shearing forces against the foot. Orthotics also help with joint alignment, and potentially reduce stresses to ligaments, tendons and muscles of the foot and lower legs. This may help to reduce injuries such as ankle sprains and knee pain.

Foot orthotics are custom made with materials specific to the athlete's needs. In high impact activity, such as running, step aerobics and basketball, materials chosen must attenuate impact forces and allow control for excessive or abnormal motions of the foot, while allowing for normal foot movement.

Lower limb injuries such as shin splints, Achilles tendonopathy and patellofemoral syndrome are often associated with sport and physical activity. Clinically I have found orthotics to be very effective in improving the recovery of these conditions. I often recommend that recovery of the injury or condition be done in conjunction with stretching and conditioning. Guidance from a Registered Physiotherapist is highly recommended.

For more information about Sports Injury prevention click here:

<http://pedorthic.ca/injury-prevention>

or speak to your doctor and see if a referral to a Canadian Certified Physician would benefit you.

Stay tuned next week for examples of how orthotics can help in the workplace too!

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