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Orthotics

What are they and do I need them?



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what are Orthotics?

Orthotics are orthopaedic devices that are used to treat a variety of biomechanical foot disorders. Whenever a person's foot is not functioning as designed, the weight of the body is not properly transferred and distributed. As a result, pain and tenderness can develop in the foot, ankle, and surrounding muscles. Orthotics work to relieve pain by realigning and supporting the ligaments and bones of the foot properly so that the foot can function properly.

Basic orthotics, such as shoe insoles and gel heel cups sold over-the-counter can relieve mild foot discomfort by taking excess pressure off sensitive areas of the foot. However, they are relatively ineffective at treating moderate to more severe foot disorders.

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Custom-tailored Orthotics are designed to meet the needs of the particular individual. Such orthotics usually require a medical professional to create an impression of the foot, called a cast, which identifies the areas of the feet that are out of alignment. The resulting cast is sent to an orthotic laboratory to create an orthopaedic device that corrects any misalignments. The orthotic is then fitted to the patient's shoe to help keep the foot properly aligned.

Since perfectly aligned feet are uncommon, nearly everyone stands to benefit from the use of an orthotic device. Orthotics can rarely cause harm to the foot. Instead, they both prevent and alleviate any number of foot disorders that cause pain, fatigue, or discomfort in individuals who are otherwise happy and healthy. The extent to which your foot is misaligned will determine the exact type of orthotic best suited for your foot.

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How do you know if you may need an orthotic?

- **Does one side of the sole of your shoe typically wear out faster than the other side?**
- **Do your feet point inward or outward when you walk?**
- **Do you have a frequent heel, ankle, knee, hip, or lower back pain?**
- **Do you frequently sprain or twist your ankle?**
- **Do you have flat feet or feet with a high arch?**
- **Are your toes crooked?**
- **Do your feet generally hurt after you spend more than a few moments standing on them?**

If you have one or more of these symptoms, you are a good candidate for an orthotic device. Remember, pain is your body's way of signalling that something is wrong. Contact your Physiotherapist for an appointment for an initial exam and find out if orthotics are right for you.

Think Orthotics sound like the answer to your pain?

Book an Initial Consultation with Niamh now!

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