

About Custom Orthotics

What is a custom orthotic?

A custom foot orthotic is a custom-made three-dimensional insert that is placed in your shoe to help the pain and discomfort caused by lower limb injuries.

Orthotics work by decreasing high-pressure areas, stabilizing foot alignment and/or cushioning the foot. Orthotics will not permanently change your anatomy and will function only when you are standing or walking on them.

Orthotics commonly used to relieve symptoms of common injuries, such as plantar fasciitis, metatarsalgia, neuromas, and various foot and ankle tendon injuries, as well as helping individuals with diabetes or arthritis. Orthotics complement other treatments such as physiotherapy, stretching, icing, and massage.

How will the orthotics feel at first?

When you first wear your orthotics, it is normal for the orthotics to feel strange; however, properly fitting orthotics should not cause any new pain, blistering or redness. If this does occur, remove the orthotics and make an appointment with your pedorthist for an adjustment.

Although symptomatic relief will not occur over night, consistently wearing your orthotics for a period of time will realign your foot and allow healing to occur.

How do I take care of my orthotics?

To clean your orthotics, wash with warm water and mild soap and air dry. Do not expose them to high heat.

How long will my orthotics last?

The body of our orthotics should last three to five years for adults and depending on wear, you may need to replace the top cover and other additions periodically.

After three to five years if your original symptoms return or you develop new symptoms, you may need a new pair of orthotics.

Children and adolescents' orthotics should be replaced after their feet grow 1 to 2 shoe sizes. We will ensure that their new orthotics will last at least one year.

Can my orthotics be adjusted?

Pedorthists are able to adjust your orthotics. If your orthotics do not feel comfortable or cause new pain or blisters, you may need an adjustment. Our facility has the equipment and materials to do all adjustments on-site.

For orthotics purchased at The FootHealth Centre, adjustments are free of charge within the first three months. After three months or for orthotics purchased elsewhere, we charge a nominal fee to cover material and labor.

Can my orthotics be repaired?

As orthotics compress and wear out over time, your activity level and body weight directly relate to the life of your orthotics. The life of your orthotics may be extended by repairing replaceable components, such as top covers, extensions, cushioning, posts, and metatarsal pads. Fees for repairs vary according to amount of material and labor required.

What shoes can I wear my orthotics in?

Your orthotics are only as good as the footwear you put them in. Proper footwear selection and fit is vital to the success of your orthotics.

Shoe Style – Your pedorthist has carefully designed your orthotics for your most important footwear so it may not fit into all of your footwear. For example, an orthotic designed for running shoes will not fit into dress shoes. If you require support in your dress shoes, our retail staff would be happy to discuss other options with you.

Shoe Features – For most people, desirable shoe features include a strong heel counter (the cup your heel fits into), torsional stability (the shoe is difficult to twist with your hands) and a correct flex point (the shoe flexes where your foot flexes).

Footwear Fit – All our retail staff are Kinesiologists and have extended training in footwear fitting. Any of the staff will be able to answer your questions and help with your shoe fitting needs.

Occasionally, you may need a footwear modification, including rocker soles, flares, or lifts. Your pedorthist will discuss these options with you.

How will you cast my foot?

The method of casting is critical to the success of the orthotics. There are many different casting techniques used to obtain a 3-D image of a foot. We use two methods: plaster slipper and foam box.

Plaster slipper casting involves applying plaster directly to the foot in order to capture the contours and shape of your foot. The casting will be done with you lying down on your stomach. This is a non-weight bearing technique and takes 5-7 minutes.

Foam box involves pushing the foot into a foam box. This is a semi-weight bearing technique often used if someone cannot get on a table for plaster casting or if a less aggressive shell shape is desired.

Each casting methods have advantages and disadvantages and your pedorthist will determine the best method for you.



How are the orthotics made?

Once the negative impression (plaster cast or foam box) of the foot is taken, it is scanned by a 3-dimensional laser scanner which converts it to a digital file. CAD/CAM equipment uses the digital file to produce a positive mold.

Raw materials are heated and draped over the positive mold and a vacuum press pulls the material tight to the contours of the mold creating the orthotic shell. Once the shell is produced the lab finishes the orthotic to the specifications of the pedorthist based on their assessment.

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