

# health talk



## Custom-made Orthotics Vs. Over-the-Counter Insoles

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### What are Custom-Made Orthotics?

Custom-made orthotic devices are produced from a three-dimensional foot cast molded from the patient's foot and is manufactured from raw materials (not pre-fabricated/shaped). Once made, these custom-made devices are inserted into the shoe to relieve pain and discomfort associated with any weakness, instability and/or deformity of the foot. It helps to realign the structures within the foot to optimize biomechanical function and reduce chance of injury.

#### WHY ARE CUSTOM-MADE ORTHOTICS PRESCRIBED?

##### Custom Orthotics Can Provide Effective Relief And/or Treatment To:

- Bunions
- High or flat arches
- Calluses and Corns
- Ankle instability
- Foot deformities
- Lower Back and Knee Pain
- Many different types of foot pain e.g. plantar fasciitis

A Chiroprapist will be able to properly diagnose the foot problem in order to suggest proper treatment. Foot orthotics are prescribed to correct biomechanical abnormalities associated with the feet and to compensate for these abnormalities. These custom made inserts are designed and constructed to target a patient's specific foot problem.

### What is the Difference between Custom-Made Orthotics and Over the Counter (OTC) Insoles?

Unlike one-size-fits-all over-the-counter shoe inserts, which might or might not address the exact problem you are experiencing, custom-made orthotics vary in shape and size depending on the particular problems the patient is experiencing relating to the feet. They can be created from a

number of materials that best suits the lifestyle of the wearer. For example, a diabetic patient would require an orthotic that would provide more cushion and accommodation to alleviate pain whereas someone with severely flattened arches would need a more rigid material to functionally provide more arch support. Also, custom made orthotics can be designed for running shoes, dress shoes, boots, and others.

Over-the-counter insoles are highly available, mass-produced, generic insoles that can be purchased at pharmacies and other retail stores. These insoles are generally affordable, ranging from inexpensive insoles to more expensive arch-support type insoles that can cost anywhere from twenty to sixty dollars. It should be noted, however, that despite the convenience of purchasing over-the-counter insoles, they can only provide temporary relief to acute pain symptoms or correct minor biomechanical abnormalities. In some instances, if they are poorly fitted to the patient's foot, they can do more harm than good.

#### Points to consider:

- Generally, OTC products are more accommodative with the ability to control only minor foot related problems if they are somewhat matching the contours of the patient's foot.
- An OTC insole will not be able to correct and/or alleviate more severe foot related problems.
- OTC insoles are created for general foot types and not made to be suited to a particular individual e.g. a high-arched foot to a low-arched foot.
- The lifespan of an OTC insole is typically shorter than a custom-made orthotic and will require more frequent replacement.
- There is greater control over the types of materials, dimensions and design in a custom-made orthotic and can be tailored to suit each individual patient.

The initial cost of a custom-made orthotic is higher than OTC insoles; however, most insurance providers will cover the full cost of your orthotics (sometimes for even more than one pair). Your custom -made orthotic will be more comfortable, more durable, and ultimately more beneficial for your foot health in the long run.

Foot pain is not normal and should not be ignored. Even pain-free feet now can lead to problems in the future. **If you're curious about your feet and your insurance coverage, book a consultation with our Chiroprapist Jennifer Lam at Form and Function Health, Performance Wellness Clinic Inc.**

