

## TEN THINGS YOU MUST KNOW BEFORE GETTING ORTHOTICS

*Because Often You Don't Actually Need Them*

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*By Tracy Smith – Podiatrist and Director  
From the Feet Up Sports Clinic  
[www.theplaintruthaboutorthotics.com](http://www.theplaintruthaboutorthotics.com)*

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## About this Special Report

If you are reading this report, it is because you have questions about whether or not you really need orthotics. First of all, kudos to you for taking the first step in seeking more information and finding an answer to your question. It is my hope that with this special report you will gain a better understanding of how Podiatry focussing on biomechanics and the whole body works in helping you achieve not only great structural and functional feet and legs, but sustainable long term results as well.

As a Podiatrist, I get many questions from people and parents just like you who are not sure if they need orthotics. In this special report, I am addressing some of the most common concerns and questions that I get from people. Throughout the pages of this report, you will discover what orthotics are, what orthotics do, how we can tell if you or your child needs orthotics, what can go wrong with orthotics, orthotics and sport, orthotics and footwear, the difference between orthotics and insoles and how many clients benefit from early treatment without orthotics.

Please feel free to contact my clinic with any questions or to schedule an exam for yourself or your child.

At the end of this report you will find information on how to receive a free, no obligation assessment from myself or my team where we can determine if you do actually need orthotics.

Sincerely,

Tracy Smith  
**Director and Podiatrist**  
From The Feet Up Sports Clinic

## 1. I think I may need orthotics

This is a common statement we hear in our clinic. People associate their foot and leg pain with the need for artificial supports in their shoes.



It's not as easy as that, and many people may not even need orthotics at all to treat their foot and leg issues.

There are many complex actions happening in the feet and legs, both structural (think toe bone is connected to the ankle bone) and functional (how your body compensates and adapts to these changes) and this is when a complete lower body biomechanical assessment by a podiatrist can determine whether your foot and leg issues are coming from your feet or further up the body, all the way to your back, and vice versa.

We determine what is causing your issues, establish a plan, and then work towards a long term solution.

## 2. What are orthotics?

Custom orthotics are specially-made devices designed for your feet. Orthotics are only manufactured after a podiatrist has conducted an evaluation of your feet.

Prescription orthotics are divided into two categories:

- **Functional orthotics** are usually crafted of a semi-rigid material such as plastic or graphite.
- **Accommodative orthotics** are softer and are meant to provide additional cushioning and support.

Orthotics typically cost more than shoe inserts (off-the-shelf devices) purchased in a retail store. Unlike shoe inserts, orthotics are moulded to fit each individual foot. Prescription orthotics are also made of top-notch materials and last many years when cared for properly. Health Insurance often helps pay for prescription orthotics.

Unfortunately, many health practitioners and shoe store employees are not adequately trained to prescribe orthotics as it requires specific university training and a good understanding of the biomechanics of the foot, leg and body.

### 3. What orthotics do – or are supposed to do?

There is much conflicting research to state whether orthotics have benefit for a variety of foot conditions.



Orthotics may not be the solution for a large range of foot and leg conditions. Each person needs to have their structure and function assessed and in many cases, a personalised plan can be established to create long term results to address foot , leg and lower body pain without the need for expensive inserts or orthotics.

The biomechanics of the foot, leg and lower body is very complex and involves the structure of the foot and the function of the tissues which all work together to propel you along.

### 4. Who needs orthotics? Anyone? Does anyone really need orthotics?

Orthotics may be prescribed for those people who have issues with a rigid, non-functional foot type, or a very flexible, non - functional foot type. They are sometimes needed temporarily after some surgical procedures, some forms of arthritis and some injuries. However, they don't necessarily need to be worn for life and may only be needed temporarily.

## 5. What can go wrong with orthotics?

Orthotics are not risk-free.

However, good or bad, they can be difficult for a body to adjust to, disrupting fine-tuned postural adaptations and forcing awkward new ones.

The body adapts to changes in footwear, sport, movement and pain. Pain is felt when the body compensates for these changes over time. Your foot is compensating and changing all the time dependant on what footwear you are wearing and what sport/exercises you are doing. Putting an artificial support in your shoes does not allow the body to change with everyday life and puts new strains on other parts of the body.

Pain in different areas, blisters, calluses and increased pain, or even that the pain has returned whilst wearing orthotics are all indications that an orthotic is not suitable for you.

## 6. How do I know if my child needs orthotics?



Many parents want to know just how early we can tell if a child needs orthotics. That's a fair question and one that should not go unanswered. You need to feel comfortable and confident with the information you are receiving regarding whether or not your child needs orthotics.

By taking your child to a Podiatrist for a biomechanical screening at the age of 7, we are able to see things that you may not be able to see on your own. By this age, children's legs and feet have developed to the point where we can see even small problems that may be associated with such things as limb length discrepancies and

growing pains associated with active children. For most 7-year-olds, their visit with the Podiatrist is nothing more than an exam. However, there are a small number of children, around 5 to 10 percent, who can benefit from what we refer to as "interceptive Podiatry." There are problems that we find and address, including:

- ❖ Back Pain
- ❖ Knee pain
- ❖ Arch Pain
- ❖ Heel Pain
- ❖ Hip pain
- ❖ Bunions
- ❖ Corns
- ❖ Callous
- ❖ Excess wear on shoes

As a parent, you may believe that you can look at your child and see if there is a problem with their feet and legs. Sometimes that can happen, but there is a lot that cannot be seen, especially by the untrained eye and it is these issues that make it important for a child to see a Podiatrist for an exam.

Here are some of the possible problems that can go wrong at an early age:

- ❖ Metatarsus Adductus (toes turning inwards)
- ❖ In-toeing
- ❖ Toe walking
- ❖ Severs disease (growth plate issues at heel)
- ❖ Osgood-Schlatters (growth plate issues at knee) Improper bone and ankle alignment
- ❖ Shin splints
- ❖ Stress Fractures
- ❖ Compartment syndrome
- ❖ Hallux Valgus (bunions)



As you can see, there is actually a lot that can go wrong, even at an early age. The best way to provide yourself and your child with peace of mind is to opt for an exam with the Podiatrist by the age of 7. Most of the time children don't start getting necessary treatment at least until the age of 9 or 10, but it's important to catch problems early so they can be corrected and don't lead to additional problems as time goes on.

Taking your child to the Podiatrist by the age of 7 gives you the best head start on identifying and addressing any problems so your child can have a healthy, active life!

At this point you may be thinking that all children will need to have Podiatry treatment early on. Relax, that's simply not the case

so don't spend your time worrying about all the "what ifs" associated with helping your child to get, and keep, a healthy, active lifestyle. In our Podiatry experience, we have examined many children and found that the number of them needing early treatment is quite low. In fact, out of the roughly 7,000 Podiatry patients we have seen only 5 to 10 percent of them have required early treatment.

Keep in mind that while it's less than 10 percent for the number of children we see, this number can vary as it is influenced by a variety of factors. Such things as geographic location and ethnicity, for example, can sometimes play a role and lead to a higher or lower number of children who benefit from early Podiatry treatment.

Generally speaking, most children do not need early Podiatry treatment, but unless your child is screened, you won't know if you fall into that 10 percent or the other 90 percent. The key factor here is early detection, making it essential that children have their first visit with a Podiatry specialist by the time they are 7 years old.

Like most other health issues that can arise, being able to detect them early is the best way to address them. The only way you can detect them early is with a biomechanical screening and assessment. If your child has not yet seen the Podiatrist, now is the time!



## 7. Orthotics and sport – Do I need orthotics if I am active in sport?

The body adapts to changes in footwear, sport, movement and pain. Pain is felt when the body compensates for these changes over time. Your foot is compensating and changing all the time depending on what footwear you are wearing and what sport/exercises you are doing.

Orthotics in sports shoes may not allow the foot to adapt to changing body motions and they can overload muscles in the leg, creating new issues and putting new strains on other parts of the foot, ankle, lower leg, knee, hip lower back and other parts of the body.

A lot of the time orthotics don't even fit in the shoes needed for sport. This just creates issues for the wearer, especially football boots, running spikes and dance shoes.



## 8. What about shoes and orthotics – What do I need to know?

Footwear plays a huge role in how the foot functions. In fact, we wouldn't have a job if it wasn't for footwear.

Every pair of shoes we put on our feet changes the function of the foot and leg. In the case of high heels, we can also see structural and functional changes over time with repetitive use as the body adapts.

We assess client's footwear for suitability and recommend changes, if necessary, to improve on everyday activity.

Fact – Sometimes a simple change of footwear can make all the difference in the world.

## 9. Is there an alternative to expensive orthotics?

Yes there is!

The body heals more easily and more quickly when issues are addressed immediately.

The longer they are left, the more difficult they are to treat and when the body compensates for these issues, it creates more problems.

It is important that once you identify pain occurring more regularly to book in with your Podiatrist to get it resolved ASAP.

Prevention is better than treatment! Lower body screenings are an excellent way of identifying issues that can arise over time and get them addressed before they become a long standing problem.

When choosing a Podiatrist to work with, opt for one that has plenty of experience, has worked with many people, and one that you feel comfortable with. Depending on the treatment needed, you may see the Podiatrist regularly for several months.

## 10. Where do I get help if I am not sure about my foot and leg problem or need for orthotics?

Here at From The Feet Up Sports Clinic we want you to get the best out of your feet and legs and the most out of life, so we offer you a free, no obligation assessment from myself or my team, so we can fully determine if you do actually need orthotics.

Simply contact our clinic on **5560 5926** or email us on [info@fromthefeetup.com.au](mailto:info@fromthefeetup.com.au) and mention this Special Report and you will be on your way to achieving optimum foot and leg health (bookings are essential).

I hope that you have found this Special Report helpful in answering some of your questions regarding whether or not you need orthotics. While I can provide some answers here to the most common questions, the best way for us to determine if you actually need orthotics, or if you want to get freedom from orthotics is to schedule a complimentary assessment.

We are ready when you are, so please call our clinic today to set up an appointment for you or your child's initial exam. We have helped countless other people and by seeing you for a complimentary screening, we can help ensure you or your child can achieve optimum foot and leg health for years to come.



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From The Feet Up Sports Clinic  
220 Lava St Warrnambool Vic 3284  
T. 5560 5926

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*The bearer of this certificate is entitled certificate is entitled to a complimentary, No-obligation initial consultation (valued at \$90)*

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