

July, 2007

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OPTM SPORTS & PHYSICAL THERAPY
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KEEPING FIT WITH OPTM

My Dogs are Tired!

Our feet are like so many other essential items; you never notice them until something goes wrong. Annually, 50% of American men and women have significant foot pain from various causes. 45% of us report that our pain results from the shoes we wear. Often, foot pain can be from repetitive stress. The average person takes 3-4,000 steps daily and each step places 1.5 times body weight force on each foot. During one hour of strenuous exercise, our feet cushion about 1,000,000 pounds of pressure. No wonder our feet hurt!

Our general health can be reflected in our feet. Tingling can be an early sign of peripheral neuropathy diabetes. Swelling and changes in color can portend kidney, heart disease or hypertension. The majority of age-related changes occur between the fourth and seventh decades. Our ligaments and muscles lose their ability to support our feet, the fat pads thin, our feet become stiff, and our feet get larger. If we are not attending to our feet daily, avoidable problems may occur, which can severely impact our lives.

Control of the foot and leg during walking is complicated and certain actions must occur to ensure normal mechanics. If we have muscles, ligaments and joints that fail to perform their functions, then our walking mechanics will be impaired and may cause local problems and possibly pains in the knees, hips or low back. Additionally, our balance can be affected, which will increase the risk of falling and all of the potential sequelae associated with the fall.

Our shoes must fit right and provide maximum support of the area under the arch, absorb shock and provide heel stability. Shoes which lace up give more support than those that slip on. We should replace running shoes every 200-400 miles, even though the upper shoe is still in good shape. The sole loses its ability to absorb shock. Wear shoes appropriate for the activity. Running shoes should not be worn for sports with lateral movements. And, if necessary, use OTC orthotics, which may need modification, to enhance an insufficient arch support. Daily exercises, massaging and inspection can prevent problems from becoming serious.

We can examine our feet for potential problems. The skin should have no areas of stress, and the color should be a healthy flesh-pink color. You should be able to see all of the joints in your toes and ankle and there should be no other signs of swelling. Lightly stroking all portions of your foot tests the sensation; normally, there should be no pain. Stand on one leg to test your balance and perform specific movements to test the strength and flexibility of your ankle and foot.

Our feet are very important to our ability to perform activities of daily and recreational living. **OPTM physical therapists** are well aware of the mechanics of the lower extremity, preventative techniques that can be taught to every person, and care of both painful conditions and post-surgical rehabilitation procedures for the feet. We will always work with your doctor to provide you with the most current best practice procedures.



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