

# Evolve

## Putting Your Best Foot Forward, With or Without Custom Made Orthotics.

Do orthotics really work? Here is one Physical Therapist's personal and professional experience.

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### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Custom Orthotics 1
- Infant Massage 2

*Many people have improved their quality of life by using orthotics, but that does not mean that we use them as our first line of defense against certain musculoskeletal ailments.*

Recently there have been several reports questioning the benefits of shoe orthotics, both custom made and over the counter brands. Research is ongoing to determine if orthotics truly change one's foot mechanics and assist in injury prevention, and to date, the conclusion of many studies has often been, "we really are not sure how orthotics work". As a Doctor of Physical Therapy and a daily user of custom made orthotics, I can say with confidence that they work for me. I have had a few different issues in my left lower extremity as a result of a foot injury, and several of the issues have cleared up with a combination of exercise and orthotic use. You could suggest that it is hard to determine if it is the exercise or the orthotics that are helping, however, as I have learned, if I go a day without the device, my foot pain begins to return.

Too many times I have heard that a client has been prescribed orthotics because they have "flat feet". In some instances, clients that never had foot pain, or even lower extremity pain, were prescribed orthotics elsewhere only to develop musculoskeletal symptoms after using them. In these cases, we have recommended they stop using the devices, and in some situations symptoms have improved.



Custom orthotics can be beneficial for some, but proper diagnosis is essential to prevent pain or injury.

How, then, do we determine if prescribing orthotics is the correct intervention for our clients? The approach at Body Dynamics is to look at the entire make up of our individual clients rather than simply focusing on one body part. At no time do we prescribe orthotics to an individual that is not experiencing a musculoskeletal complaint. We like to take the "if it ain't broke don't fix it" concept when it comes to putting a device in a client's shoe. Steps taken prior to recommending orthotics for someone with questionable foot mechanics and musculoskeletal complaints include exercise, proper foot wear selection, and activity modification.

## Orthotics, Shoes, and What's Right For You.

When these approaches are exhausted and someone receives benefits from a trial of orthotic like support, that is when we make the recommendation for the use of a device.

Today's world of footwear, especially the running shoe industry, has taken on extensive research to create different types of sneakers for different types of feet. I hear a lot of clients ask, "what is the best sneaker on the market?" In reality, most brands offer high quality sneakers, but the real question that needs to be addressed is, "what sneaker is best for my foot type?" In the same way orthotics do not benefit everyone with flat feet, the same motion control shoe will not benefit everyone with flat feet. There are many considerations and possible trials and errors to complete before finding the correct shoe. Having more knowledge about your foot type and different sneaker specifications will allow you to sample a variety of shoes that may suit your needs, and help you make an informed decision before purchasing expensive footwear.

Orthotics can be a costly investment. However, if you have exhausted exercise, footwear choice, and activity modification without relief, and the results of your examination support a hypothesis of poor foot mechanics contributing to your complaint, consideration for a device has to be one of the options for appropriate treatment. Many people have improved their quality of life by using orthotics, but that does not mean that we use this as our first line of defense against certain musculoskeletal ailments.

Obviously, more research needs to be conducted to provide us with better evidence and quality decision making tools when prescribing orthotics. Our profession continues to look into this issue, and in absence of evidence we need to use our clinical experience and expertise to make decisions. With the anecdotal success that I have experienced personally and professionally with several clients, I am not ready to say orthotics are not beneficial.



Orthotics are not for everyone, but for many the use of them has proven invaluable in the treatment of musculoskeletal ailments.

## Infant Massage Instruction is Now Available at Body Dynamics

You may have heard a lot about Infant Massage lately, but did you know that we are now offering it as our newest service available BDI? We are proud to add Infant Massage Instruction to our growing list of services to help you, and your family, achieve optimal health and wellness. Infant Massage promotes bonding between parents and child, which helps support a strong, healthy, and life long relationship. Infant Massage is not meant to cure or treat ailments, but it can provide some much needed relief from growing pains, teething, gas, colic, and constipation. Soothing massage can also help improve sleep patterns, not only for baby, but for parents as well!

If you are a new parent, grandparent, or just have a new addition in your life, please pass this along to your newest loved one. Our Certified Infant Massage instructor will help guide parents and caregivers through massage strokes, behavior states, and body cues.. Appointments are available as private one-on-one sessions, or in a group class format starting on July 8<sup>th</sup>, and our pricing is sensitive to growing families. Please call our front desk for more information, or email Massage Therapist Stephanie for more specific details at: [SMaziejka@bodydynamicsinc.com](mailto:SMaziejka@bodydynamicsinc.com)