



A Consumers Guide

GUIDE

to buying **CUSTOM**
Foot Orthotics —

“Dedicated to getting your feet back in great shape
so they are ready for your busy life”



3-10126 Hwy 26 East, Collingwood, Ontario L9Y3Z1 Tel: 705.444.9929

At times, you've had serious doubts about whether you've made the right decision or done the right thing in a certain situation.

Make the right decision about your foot health by reading this informative guide.

First of all, there are many structural conditions that can be treated effectively with custom foot orthotics. Some common ones are:

- ✓ Heel pain
- ✓ Arch pain
- ✓ Knee arthritis pain
- ✓ Hip and back pain
- ✓ Bunion
- ✓ Hammer toes



You may be experiencing one or more of the above potentially debilitating conditions. Or you may be looking to prevent foot problems as you age. Or you may be searching for ways to improve your athletic performance in your favorite sport, such as golf. If so, it is possible that you have been told that you need custom foot orthotics. Is it also possible that you do not really understand what foot orthotics are and how they work. Then read on...

This guide will teach you:

- 1** Who is qualified to prescribe and fit orthotics
- 2** How orthotics are made
- 3** What should be included in the examination
- 4** What kind of warranty you should have
- 5** What information is required by your insurance company if you are submitting the claim



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It is critical that you ask questions and keep yourself informed throughout the entire process to ensure you get the proper treatment. The most important question to start with is...

What are the qualifications of the the person making your orthotics?

Don't be afraid to ask what formal training your potential orthotic supplier has in custom foot orthotic therapy. Even if you don't have insurance, you can follow some of the guidelines that insurance companies use to help you reach your decision.

Insurance companies are currently recommending that custom foot orthotics be prescribed and dispensed by a foot specialist who is specially trained to assess, design, manufacture and fit orthotics and footwear. Qualified prescribers include physicians, chiropodists and podiatrists. These health care practitioners will diagnose whether or not an orthotic will be beneficial to your specific foot condition.



Next you must select an orthotic supplier. Chiropodists and podiatrists can prescribe, as well as supply custom foot orthotics. Other eligible suppliers are pedorthists and orthotists. These professionals are trained specifically in treating conditions of the the feet and lower legs.

The important thing to realize is that the prescribers and providers listed above are licensed and governed by either a provincial or national body and are subject to strict standards of practice. You do not have this accountability if you use other suppliers. As a result, you may end up with an inferior orthotic device and your insurance claim may be rejected.

Buyer Beware Be aware of shoddy suppliers that parade around selling you inexpensive prefabricated insoles as custom orthotics. The science of biomechanics of your feet and lower legs is complex and you cannot get true custom made orthotics with a brief 5 min examination. And you should avoid retail locations that have a booth or fancy scanner that you step on and get so called orthotics. Would you do that for new eyeglasses? Like eyeglasses, custom orthotics are prescription medical devices that should be dispensed by a qualified foot specialist!

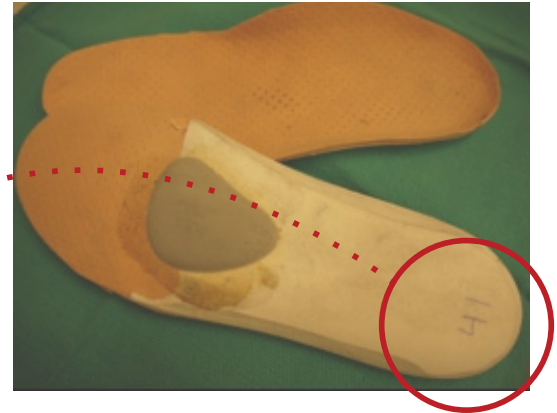


The place to come for the latest in expert foot care.

How do I know if the orthotics are actually custom made?

If you are told that you can get custom foot orthotics the same day or the next day, they are probably not custom made. The manufacture of foot orthotics involves many intricate steps and therefore takes an average of 5-7 business days at a professional orthotic lab.

If your orthotic has a size written on it, it is NOT custom made. It is a prefabricated insole that may have been customized for you. This is not likely what you paid for and will not qualify under your insurance plan.



What should be included in the examination?

Your examination should include 5 critical items beginning with a complete medical history. Many medical conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis and diabetes can have dramatic effects in the feet and thus need to be considered when manufacturing orthotics.

- ✓ Biomechanical examination - checking the range of motion, strengths and alignments of your feet and lower legs
- ✓ Weightbearing (standing) examination - looking at your feet from front and back
- ✓ Gait analysis - watching you walk towards and away from the practitioner checking balance, hip movement, shoulder drop, etc
- ✓ Footwear analysis and advice - checking your existing and old shoes for abnormal wear patterns and to see if the shoes match your foot structure
- ✓ Obtaining weight and activity level - this will be used to determine the correct material to use to make the orthotics and how flexible or rigid it needs to be to effectively control your foot function

Without all this information, it is not possible to make an accurate decision about the specific type of foot orthotics to best suit your needs. That means someone is "guessing" about your feet and their function as they manufacture your orthotics. **Do you really want this happening?**



“The science of **biomechanics** of your feet and lower limbs is complex,”



What position should your foot never be in for the impression taking (casting)?

Standing or walking! If you stand in a foam box, or if you sit and have your foot pressed down into the foam by pushing on your knee, your foot will be captured in a flattened, deformed position. Also if you lean to one side or put more pressure on your heel or your toes, the cast will be skewed. A non-weight bearing impression is the position of choice. This can be done using a plaster cast, a 3D laser scanner or even a special iPad scanner. This allows the practitioner to place your foot in the corrected position thus eliminating the guesswork at the lab.

Many people believe orthotics are expensive.

It is very time consuming and very messy to custom make and fit orthotics. Specialized manufacturing equipment and a safe facility with appropriate ventilation is required. Quality labs may undergo an accreditation process and become a member of the Prescription Foot Orthotic Laboratory Association. This is part of the cost for health practitioners to use these labs, but it also sets high standards so that you are protected and you know that you are receiving a true custom orthotic.

In Ontario, the average cost of custom orthotics is \$400-\$600. Don't be fooled by lower prices and false incentives. This is a case where you pay for what you get. Included in your orthotic fee is the expertise of the practitioner assessing, making, fitting and following up to ensure the proper fit and results of your orthotics. Proper training in the science of biomechanics of the feet and lower legs requires years of formal education. This training helps to ensure that you receive a proper custom foot orthotic that should provide consistent comfort and support and eliminate or reduce your pain. **Orthotics can literally change your life!**

What patients are saying...

“The perfect blend of empathy and education. Sensible approach to care. Realistic expectations about home based self care. And ultimately, improvement as expected.” -Liz C.



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Why do orthotic shoes not exist?

“Orthotic shoes” is not a term recognized by insurance companies. Placing a custom orthotic inside an off-the-shelf shoe does not make it an orthotic shoe. As such, it will NOT be reimbursable under your insurance.

Orthopedic shoes do exist and these may be covered by your insurance if they are “custom made” or “off-the-shelf with certain modifications.” You should confirm your insurance coverage prior to ordering the shoes.

Additional questions you should **ask** to protect yourself

Q Do you recommend breaking-in my orthotics gradually?

A The answer should be, “YES”.

Q What follow up care is provided and is it included in the cost?

A You should be offered an appointment to have your orthotics checked 4-6 weeks after you start wearing them.

Q Can adjustments be done onsite if required?

A This eliminates the need to send your orthotics back to the lab for an adjustment that may take less than 5 minutes.

Q What warranty is included?

A First and foremost, all clinicians who provide orthotics should be concerned about your health and will thus work with you to resolve any concerns you may have. All quality orthotic labs also offer some type of warranty period.



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SUCCESS STORIES

Don't take our word for it, read what other patients are saying about how the orthotics they received from our clinic has made a difference in their lives. All had severe, sharp, persistent and constant pain:



The perfect blend of empathy and education. Sensible approach to care. Realistic expectations about home based self care. And ultimately, improvement as expected.

-Liz C.



Great experience. Heel pain gone. Very professional.

-Rex W.



Comfortable fit with every orthotic that has been fitted to me. Great service. Aware and elaborate on problems with regards to knees, ankles and feet. Reliable.

-Andrew B.

If you, or someone you love are suffering with foot pain, don't wait!
Call our office today! **705.444.9929**

My expertise lies in evaluating and addressing the structural aspects of your feet and lower legs. By optimally realigning your feet with a proper custom orthotic, you can experience dramatic and often immediate relief of pain.

It is important to note here that all orthotics are not created equal. Unfortunately, prescribing custom orthotics is not regulated by our government so anyone can say they make orthotics. As a consumer, it is your responsibility to do your homework, so you get the best orthotic. As a general rule, a non-weight bearing (sitting with your feet elevated) is the preferred way to take the impressions of your feet that are needed to manufacture your orthotics. Walking across a mat on the floor cannot provide the information needed to create an orthotic. Nor can standing on a machine at your local pharmacy or department store.

There is an endless selection of over the counter / prefab inserts that are helpful if all you need is extra cushion but these do not provide you with the unique correction your feet require. Many are just too soft. Think about this... how can an insert that you collapse with one finger support your entire body weight above? It may be comfortable but it is not structurally corrective so it will not benefit you long term.

I became a registered chiropodist over 20 years ago and during that time the way I prescribe and manufacture orthotics has changed significantly 3 times. This journey has led me to where I am today.

After I assess your structure sitting and standing, I use a 3-D scanner and iPad scanner to obtain the impressions of your feet. I will have you standing on a sample pair of orthotics to test how much correction you can likely tolerate. This is done using various wedges and pads that are calibrated to exact specifications.

Using this system, I can determine what degree of realigning you need and then balance that with how much realigning you can actually tolerate. Many people cannot be fully realigned but there can be enough improvement for them to experience a dramatic reduction in their level of pain.

Again, there is a difference in how orthotics are made and who prescribes them. When you purchase orthotics from me you are not just getting a device that goes in your shoes - **you are getting a pain relief treatment.**

Now that you have read this report, I hope you have a better understanding of how important it is to have your foot orthotics made by a specialist. I have seen countless patients in my office benefit from orthotics. **You could be next!**

If you, or your loved one, are suffering with foot or leg pain, I encourage you to set up an appointment to learn if my approach to managing foot pain is right for you. **Don't suffer any longer!**



Tony Abbott D.Ch.



The place to come for the latest in expert foot care.

CALL
TODAY

705.444.9929