Testimonial Correct Toes

An important innovation has just entered the market of functional foot care products. For years most products have focused on putting more stuff under dysfunctional (and even fully functional) arches. The incorrect assumption was that an arch must have support under it. In architecture and nature the exact opposite is true. Things pass under arches and they are strong if supported well on the ends.

Let's briefly describe the amazing function of the barefoot in healthy gait.

The toes (especially the great toe) play a vital role in normal arch functioning, both in the shock absorption and propulsion phases. In normal stride cycle the toes are flexed up on landing so the foot lands with the arch high like a shock absorber at full extension. Then the toes lower and the arch flattens dissipating shock in a controlled manner. As stride moves forward the heel lifts up, flexing the toes up, and lifting the arch- turning it into a rigid lever for an energy efficient push-off. This “Windlass Mechanism” requires free movement of the toes and plantar fascia ligament for proper shock absorption and propulsion.

The great toe being able to stabilize the arch in midstance and takeoff is critical for a functional gait and normal arch functioning. Remember an arch is supported by its ends- this is the front end and a heel flat and balanced with the forefoot is the other end. When medical patients lose their great toe due to injury or infection they are left with a foot that is very unstable, with no ability to absorb shock, and with limited to no propulsive properties. Not surprisingly, many of these patients often up with severe disabilities and higher amputations as they traumatize other foot structures.

The big toe must be properly aligned and the flexor hallucis longus and brevis allowed to perform normal stabilizing functions.

Correct alignment of Great Toe
Alignment of Great toe with Hallux Valgus

You can feel this yourself if you stand on one foot and try not to shift to the side to balance…you feel the big toe activated and gripping the ground. You also feel the gluteus medius (upper outer part of your buttocks) stabilizing your hip and preventing your pelvis from tipping.

OK, so what do Correct Toes have to do with all this?

Millions of women and men have a malalignment of their great toe called hallux valgus. This condition is caused by improper footwear with elevated the heels and a pointed toebox which pinches the toes into this position. It cannot be corrected surgically or with traditional orthotics. Yoga afficianados have used products such as Yoga toes and toe spacers for years to restore alignment in the great toe. These are great products but unfortunately cannot be worn during activity. Correct toes will position the toes back into their normal anatomic position to restore the function of all critical stabilizing and shock absorbing functions of the toes and foot.

Arch supports will do none of this and at worst inhibit all the natural and essential functions, especially normal pronation.

My own short experience with this product has been a profound new discovery. I am a marathon runner still running at the national level as a Master. I had surgery for severe arthritis changes in my large toes 10 years ago. This left me with essentially a fused first toe and a slight valgus deformity. I did not take the advice of finding a new activity, and chose instead to learn more about gait and footwear. Innovators Danny Dreyer of ChiRunning, Jay Dicharry at UVA Center for Endurance Sport, Danny Abshire of Newton Running, and Galahad Clark of Terra Plana Vivo Barefoot have all had huge roles in my path of discovery.
My foot without Correct Toes. Notice inward angle of large toe (hallux valgus in medical terms)
My foot with Correct Toes- proper large toe alignment

Periodically I tried spacers between my 1st and second toe to get the large toe aligned. Often these would move position as I ran. What was certain though was the immediately felt benefit in stride efficiency when the big toe was perfectly aligned…I felt my foot was the magic spring it was when I was a child running effortlessly on the beach. My first run in the Correct Toes was another one of the many AHA moments I’ve had in a life of running. The proper function and space was now allowed in all the toes and they maintained the position in the soft gel rubber for the entire run.

As a retail store owner with the mission of teaching customers better foot function and getting them in flat and more functional footwear I see many runners and walkers with hallux valgus deformities. Most are completely unaware of the effect of this common and seemingly minor problem on foot function. With education, awareness, and complimentary products we can restore these folks to healthier activity.

So get your toes straight and back in the game …you too will discover something completely new.

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