

# TAKING CARE OF YOUR FOOT & ANKLE

## FOOT & ANKLE INJURIES



Most commonly reported injury in the foot/ankle region: **ankle sprains**

Plantar fasciitis:

An irritation of the plantar fascia—tough tissue on very bottom of foot that begins at heel and is attached to toes



Catchall phrase for a number of foot/ankle problems: **shin splints**

Metatarsalgia

Pain in the forefoot, usually caused by over-prominence of one of the metatarsal heads

Tarsal Tunnel Syndrome:

Can often be blamed on shoes that do not provide enough arch support and stability, causing the foot to pronate excessively

Flat feet:

Also called “pancake feet” is a condition in which the arch is judged to be lower than normal

High arches:

Condition in which the arches are higher than normal; the main concern is to make sure that the shoes have enough surface contact and support

## A PHYSICAL THERAPIST’S PERSPECTIVE

### WHAT IS THE CAUSE?

- OUR FEET AND ANKLES KEEP OUR BODIES UPRIGHT AND STABLE
- THIS PUTS GREAT PRESSURE ON OUR FEET AND ANKLES
- THIS CAN TURN MINOR PROBLEMS INTO MAJOR ONES

### SHOES ARE OFTEN THE CULPRITS.

#### SHOES MUST:

- FIT RIGHT
- BE COMFORTABLE
- PROVIDE SUPPORT (MAXIMUM COVERAGE OF SURFACE AREA UNDER PLANTAR ARCH)
- PROVIDE STABILITY TO THE HEEL AREA
- ABSORB SHOCK WHILE YOU WALK



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## Disease-Related Foot Problems

**Diabetes** can lead to peripheral neuropathy, a condition in which feeling is reduced in the foot. A simple screening procedure can tell instantly if you are at high risk for peripheral neuropathy and its complications. A combination of professional and home care can prevent up to 50% of foot amputation due to peripheral neuropathy.

**Charcot's arthropathy** is a very serious (and fairly rare) condition that involves a disruption or disintegration of joints in the foot and ankle. Its cause is not well understood, but it is often linked with diabetes.

**Arthritis** is the inflammation and swelling of the cartilage and the lining of the joints. The foot and ankle region is especially susceptible because of the large number of joints at risk (33 in each foot) coupled with the tremendous weight-bearing load on the feet.



## HOW A PHYSICAL THERAPIST CAN HELP

Physical therapists may choose from an array of options in treating you.

### INCLUDING EXERCISES FOR:

- FLEXIBILITY, STABILITY, BALANCE, STRENGTH, COORDINATION & RESTORATION OF RANGE OF MOTION



MASSAGE, ELECTRICAL STIMULATION, ULTRASOUND, TRACTION/MOBILIZATION, HEAT/COLD

### WORKING WITH INDIVIDUALS:



A PHYSICAL THERAPIST WILL CREATE A PROGRAM OF REHABILITATION THAT IS CUSTOM-DESIGNED FOR YOUR PARTICULAR PROBLEM.



TO AVOID OR OVERCOME A FOOT/ANKLE PROBLEM, YOU MAY NEED TO LEARN SOME NEW HABITS/MODIFY YOUR CURRENT LEVEL OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY.

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