

What are orthotics (insoles)?

Foot orthotics are specially designed shoe inserts which help restore the natural position of the foot. To enable you to obtain the best results from your orthotics please follow the advice below.

Orthotic use

The devices need to be worn-in very gradually during low impact activity. Always allow yourself time to get used to your orthotics.

Gradually increase the time spent wearing the orthotics until you feel comfortable wearing them all day.

Wear the devices as follows: day one – up to one hour, day two – two hours, leading up to day six when you should try wearing the devices all day. If necessary repeat a day until the orthoses feel completely comfortable.

Sports and activities:

Only when you are completely comfortable using the orthotics for low impact activity should you begin to gradually use them for

higher impact activities, such as hill walking, running and sports. The step-up in activity should be a slow and gradual process allowing the body time to adapt to the changes in foot function.

What if there is a problem?

Wearing the orthotics may at first produce mild muscle aches as your body adjusts to them and your new foot position. They should not cause you any pain, such as blisters, make any current pain worse or cause a new pain. If the orthoses do cause any of the above problems then **you must stop wearing them**. If the pain then subsides try wearing the devices again and go back a previous step in the wear-in period. If this fails to resolve the pain then contact the clinic that you normally attend for advice.

Appropriate footwear

The orthotics you have been provided with can be used in a wide variety of footwear and are designed to be swapped from shoe to shoe. The orthotics will take up room in your shoes which need to be sufficiently roomy, low heeled and have a fastening.

When choosing new footwear it is advisable that you take your new orthotics with you to the shop to ensure that they are a good fit.

How long will they last?

This can vary depending upon a number of factors including age, weight and activity level, however up to 18 months is around the average for the standard type devices. Bespoke devices are designed to last for a minimum of five years depending on the prescription. The products' life will be maximised if they are properly cared for. The best way to clean the devices is to gently sponge them with warm soapy water and then dry with a paper towel. Do not soak your orthotics for long periods of time or dry artificially.

Can I have additional pairs?

NHS podiatry patients are entitled to one pair of devices free of charge. The devices are replaced based on clinical need however bespoke devices can be refurbished (renewal of top cover etc.) without having to replace the whole device. You can purchase additional pairs through the department please ask.