Arthritic Foot

Rheumatoid arthritis and osteoarthritis are two of the most common types of arthritis found in the joints of the foot and ankle. Both conditions are inflammatory and progressive, resulting in pain and loss of function. Arthritic pain can often lead to inactivity or difficulty with walking. The following information will explain how treatments from your BioPed clinician can contribute to maintaining an active and healthy lifestyle.

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**CAUSE**

Osteoarthritis or “wear and tear” arthritis results from the breakdown and loss of cartilage in joints. This can be caused by long term mechanical stress on the joint, previous injury, overuse, or by other medical and mechanical factors.

Osteoarthritis can occur for a variety of reasons, some of which are included in the following list:

- Obesity
- Muscle weakness
- Poor joint alignment, such as flat feet or high arches
- Injury/Overuse of the joint
- Reduced bone density
- Wearing high heels or pointy-toe shoes

Rheumatoid arthritis is a systemic disease that can cause pain, swelling, and stiffness in the joints. It can affect many joints in the body, but commonly affects the feet and hands.

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**EFFECT**

Osteoarthritis starts intermittently but can progress to a chronic daily pain. The wearing away of joint cushioning cartilage causes pain that is typically increased with activity and is relieved with rest. The structure of your feet and the way you walk can both be linked to osteoarthritis in your foot, ankle or knee. As joints become stiff, walking can be a challenge. You may require a medical device, such as orthotics or a brace to get through your day without restriction.

Rheumatoid arthritis causes toe joints to migrate such that the toes start to point toward the outside of the foot. Toes may also become contracted and joints can be come more stiff. This can lead to corns on the toes or callusing under the ball of the foot. Some patients will also have painful arthritic nodules. Any of these factors can make walking and fitting shoes comfortably more difficult with time.
THE SOLUTION

CUSTOM-MADE ORTHOTICS
Custom-made orthotics are manufactured from a 3-dimensional mould taken of your feet. Your BioPed Foot Specialist will create an orthotic that reflects the amount of support, correction, and type of cushioning materials needed to give you comfort and relief. Orthotic features for the arthritic foot may include extra cushioning, a cupped heel to distribute pressure evenly or a metatarsal support that fits into the hollow immediately behind the ball of the foot.

TAILORED FOOTBED
Depending on the progression of your arthritis and the location of your pain, a tailored footbed may alleviate some of your discomfort. Your BioPed clinician will be able to modify an off-the-shelf footbed in our clinic lab to better suit your foot structure and the way that you walk. Metatarsal supports, wedges, heat moulding, and cushioning are all additions that can be made to these insoles.

FOOTWEAR
Arthritic feet should be supported by proper footwear for day-to-day activities, as well as around the house. Features to look for in your shoes should include the following:
- Extra depth in the forefoot.
- Removable insoles to accommodate orthotics.
- Adjustable laces or straps.
- Stretchy uppers.
- Forefoot rocker

BIOPED CLINICAL SPECIALISTS
BioPed clinicians are specialized in the casting, manufacturing, fitting, and modification of many types of custom-made orthotics. Additionally, a great orthotic must be partnered with a comfortable and supportive shoe. Our clinicians will make shoe recommendations or modifications as needed. Your visit to our clinic will include a detailed exam and treatment options will be presented that are specific to your needs.