'A PAIN IN THE FOOT!'

A Guide To Getting Yourself On An Even Keel

Peter Bennett BSc DC

‘A Pain In The Foot!’

A Guide To Getting Yourself On An Even Keel

By Peter Bennett

I don’t know about you, but this season always makes me want to get out and onto the fells!

After all, it won’t be long until the leaves turn…

If you’re not one for putting your feet up, I’ll put a safe bet on one of three things:

You’re off for a relaxing day out with the family

You’re taking part in a favourite sport

You’re finding some peace and quiet out on the hills

Whichever it is – one things certain:

You’ll need your feet more than ever.

Try this quickly.

Pick up a pair of shoes you commonly wear.

Turn them over and look at the soles.

Notice anything?

Is there excessive wear on one side more than the other?

Does it look like the shoe has stretched out of shape?

Or is there no sole left at all?

That was just a warm up. We’ll come back to this later.

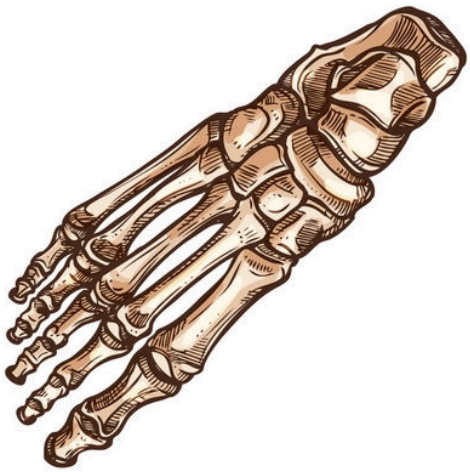
Last thing you need to do.

Read the questionnaire below and think about whether any of it applies to you.

Just make a mental note. Don't worry, there's no score out of ten or trick questions – just be honest.

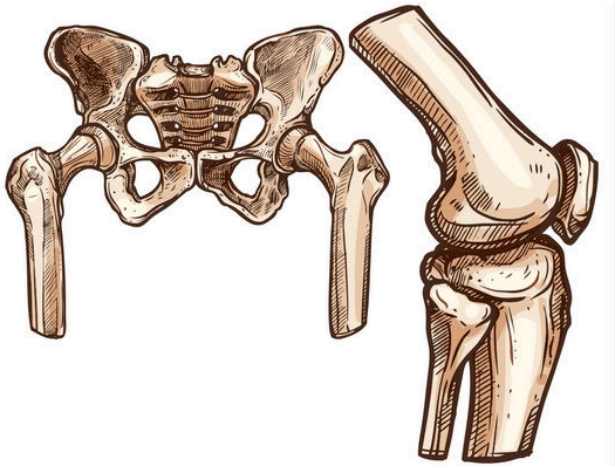
Do you have (or get):

- ☐ **Bunions?**
- ☐ **Flat Feet?**
- ☐ ***Shin Splints?***
- ☐ **Fallen Arches?**
- ☐ **Hammer Toes?**
- ☐ ***Heel Pain?***
- ☐ ***Arch Pain?***
- ☐ **Feet Joint Pain?**
- ☐ **Big Toe Joint Problems?**
- ☐ **Tarsal Tunnel Syndrome?**



How about:

- ☐ **Hip Pain?**
- ☐ **Knee Pain?**
- ☐ ***Lower Back Pain?***



All the conditions above are linked to one another. They're found together and they'll commonly share the same causes.

It's like a chain reaction.

'A' will turn to **'B'**, and **'B'** will start including **'C'**… and then **'D'**… You get the idea.

In fact, there is one condition considered to be one of the **largest causes of all those problems.** **(Dr. Axe, Josh. 2017)**

It's not obvious to the naked eye

It's not scary – or at least doesn't sound scary…

It's not often taken seriously enough once people do know.

That problem is **hyper pronation**.

To understand hyper pronation we must first understand pronation and supination.

Pronation & Supination

We'll start with the basics.

Pronation and supination are both perfectly natural and essential.

While walking, we do both without even being aware.

It's the motion of the ankle bone rolling inward (pronation) and the foot bones rolling outward (supination).

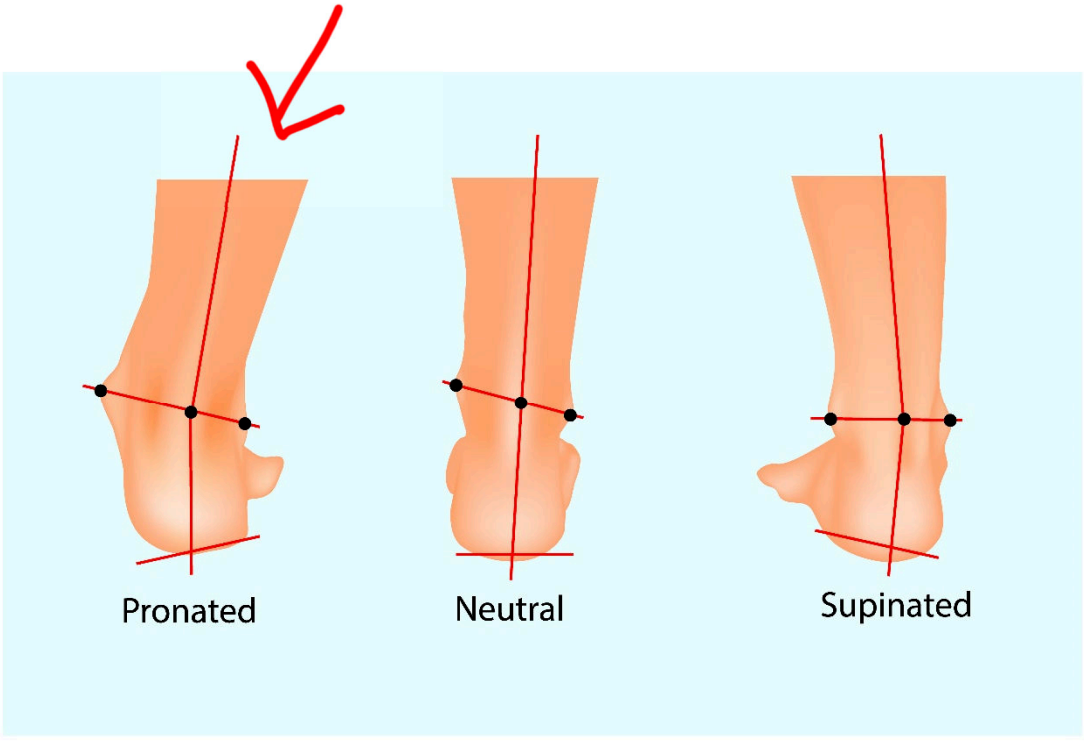
This function protects the ankle from uneven ground and hard impact. Without it, you wouldn't even be able to walk properly and the entire body would be at risk of collapsing.

At times, we might all overextend slightly without realising, either in the pronation or supination stage.

However, overextending too much can be dangerous.

Particularly in the **pronation stage.**

If the ankle bone goes beyond the natural point of healthy motion, the ankles will visibly roll inwards. It will look something like this:



We call this hyper pronation.

The hyper pronation itself won't hurt but what comes later might…

One of the problems with this overextended function is **it's not something we can consciously control very easily.**

It's a skeletal issue. A development from years of improper biometrics within the body.

To get a clearer picture, I'll go into a little more detail.

What's Going On When The Ankle Hyper Pronates?

You have the **ankle bone** and the **heel bone**.

As the foot comes into contact with the ground, the slope of the heel bone forces the ankle to slide forward and inward, cushioning the blow.

We could be here for a long time going through the different theories to why it happens, but long story short: **for some people this inward roll is too excessive**.

Skip ahead some years and the ankle bone can be seen in X-rays to be completely misaligned and continuing to displace even more!

Slowly but surely, you get less and less support in the foot.

But that's not the only problem.

Remember further up in the questionnaire: all those nasty conditions were direct symptoms from this very problem!

That's because through the lack of support **extra strains are being placed on the soft tissue and ligaments within the foot.**

Let's have a glimpse of what this means:

- **Increased risk of injury!**
- **Painful feet when you walk**
- **Discomfort and disrupted sleep**
- **Permanently reoccurring damage like stress fractures!**
- **Less ability to participate in activities and have fun on days out**
- **Your future health decline: bunions, flat feet, joint problems etc.**

It's no one's idea of a good time.

Does this sound like you already?

Or, maybe you're on your way to that place?

But it's not just that – **hyper pronation effects the whole body.**

Your body's correct spinal alignment relies on your feet.

That's why this is so relevant to what I do as a Chiropractor!

If you're hyper pronating that means:

Your knee can become inflamed and very painful as the kneecap attempts to re-balance your weight with the thighbone.

Your hips in response, will compensate by twisting – that's even more strain on the legs!

Your lower back will suffer shooting pains and aches from your newly misaligned spine – and all because of your feet.

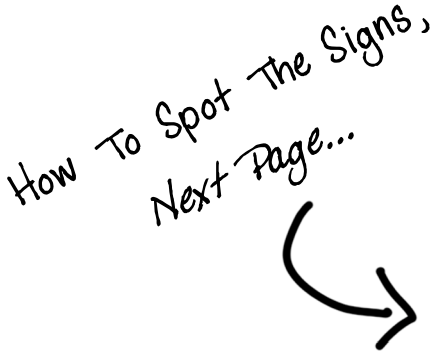
(Brogan, Dylan. 2014)

Just think – *how much do you rely on your feet?*

Every minute of every hour of every day!

You need them working properly.

Before I dive into ways you can help yourself out; you need to know how to spot the signs of hyper pronation.



What To Look Out For?

If you get the symptoms above and have looked at your ankles to see if they look like the hyper pronated ankles in the picture, but are still not sure - try this!

If your ankles are imbalanced, the rest of your body will be also.

That means your posture will be less than perfect:

1.) Stand with your shoes off, facing forward.

2.) Look down at your knees, ankles and toes.

3.) **Observe: are both your feet and knees facing forward?**

(There can be a minor external rotation of the feet with the toes pointing outward)

- ✓ **The toes, feet and ankle should be aligned in the same direction and facing forward.**
- ✓ **The ankles and knees should be facing forward (very slight roll is okay)**
- ✗ **The ankles and knees should NOT be rolling inward or outward (very slight roll is okay)**

If it looks like your knees roll inward and your toes outward – **this indicates hyper pronation.**

So the next thing you'll be asking yourself is – what can I do about it?

What Will Help?

Like most things, there is not a 'One Method Fits All' answer.

Each individual's biometrics will determine why it's happening. The best thing you can do is to eliminate one by one an array of causes and identify which methods work for you.

Here are some things to try:

- **Treat bunions and calluses:** Both are symptoms of an underlying condition, so to remove them you should seek the advice of a podiatrist. However, for general maintenance and relief, use a pumice stone to file down hard lumps of skin. This will stop excessive rubbing on your shoes and help maintain a better foot position. **(NHS. 2016)**
- **Wear firm and supportive shoes:** And no – flat sneakers don't count, nor do high heels – sorry ladies. It's important that your shoes fit properly, otherwise you'll increase your chances of getting flat feet and arch problems.

  Fallen arches are also more prone to injury if you're wearing flimsy shoes. All in all, insufficient footwear won't help matters for painful arches or hyper pronating ankles.
- **Massage to loosen muscles:** Scar tissue and adhesions can contribute to arch problems and again could be adversely effecting your pronation. A good massage for the lower limbs will loosen and activate muscles, helping to re-distribute weight and alignment. You don't have to fork out lots of money for this – just get a natural oil or a foam roller.
- **Stretch more often:** On a similar note, remember to stretch! More blood will get into the muscles – this will help break down scar tissue and increase circulation, flexibility and help with weight distribution. Better weight distribution will make a positive difference to a hyper pronating ankle.
- **Improve your posture:** Good posture keeps the body aligned and allows muscles to be used properly. It will also remove physical stress from your ligaments and ankle.

  Try to stop poor habits: slouching while sitting, standing with all the weight on one leg, rolling your shoulders forward and hunching over objects like phones and tablets.

  An easy way to do this is by taking 5 seconds out whenever you do anything throughout the day and ask yourself *'Is this my natural position? Am I holding myself in higher tension in one part of my body more than another?'*

It will be difficult to remember at first, but keep at it and it'll soon sink in. You'll begin to notice small things like your chin pointing out while you're concentrating, or your bottom pushed out, or perhaps just not standing fully upright.

- **Strengthen the arch:** Walk around barefoot more often and try some simple arch strengthening exercises. All will be beneficial for a hyper pronating ankle. The exercises below will heighten the arch (toe curls) and strengthen the Achilles tendon (calf stretches).

  Toe Curl: Sit on the floor and extend your feet in front of you – keep your feet and toes pointed.

  Hold for 5 seconds.

  Next, do the same again but this time flex only your toes.

  (Repeat this sequence about 10 times)

  Calf Stretch: Face a wall and place your hands on its surface. Bring your right foot forward with your knee bent but foot flat on the floor.

  Next, extend your left leg straight back with your heel flat on the floor.

  Keep your back knee straight.

  Lean into the wall until you feel a stretch in your left calf.

  (Hold for 30 seconds and repeat with the opposite leg)

  (Dr. M. St. John, Tina. 2011)

- **Improve ankle mobility:** An easy way to tell whether you have a lack of ankle mobility is with the 'knee to wall test'.

  Start by placing your foot flat and straight on a level surface, 4 inches from a wall.

  Next, attempt to touch your knee to the wall without your knees bowing inward or outward (**Valgus** or **Varus** collapse) and without lifting your heel off the ground.

  If you can't do this under the guidelines above *or can*, but with a 'pinching' feeling or pressure at the front of the ankle while performing the test; then you could benefit from some ankle mobility exercises.

  There's plenty of choice – the best I've seen with easy-to-follow videos is Dr. John Rusin's site. Copy this link:
  https://drjohnrusin.com/10-exercises-to-instantly-improve-ankle-mobility/

  If you do have a joint mobility limitation then this too is likely to cause problems with your ankle pronation.

  (Millett, Andrew. 2016)

Opt For More Support!

I guarantee you.

I GUARANTEE!

Using the methods above to 'fix' your hyper pronation over a few months will have **1 of 3 outcomes.**

1# The Pain Stops!

That's really good news! But has the ankle become less hyper pronating and more neutral? If not, there's still a serious issue to address.

2# Your Ankle Corrects Itself.

That's the best outcome! It means you're no longer so susceptible to common injury and stress fractures. And if your pain hasn't gone away yet, it will do soon, provided the hyper pronation was the source of the pain.

3# You'll Feel Better, But It's Done *NOTHING* For The Pain AND Hyper Pronating Foot.

This means that your body biometrics (the individual physical characteristics) are making recovery almost impossible!

I doubt you'll still be holding this in 4 weeks' time; so remember your options!

They're actually pretty straight forward.

Outcome 2 – keep up the good work and make sure your lifestyle choices support your feet!

Outcomes 1 & 3 – we'll need a different type of support. If you're an athlete, or if you're just really, really keen to change your feet's condition – see a podiatrist. If you don't have time for that but want results, I'd recommend an orthotic insole.

More on orthotic insoles…

An orthotic insole is a type of **medically designed shoe insert** that aligns the foot and ankle in the most biometrically efficient way. It corrects imbalances like hyper pronation and reduces stress on ligaments and joints.

You'll also have added support in areas where your foot over-inclines, making it next to impossible for your ankle roll over from everyday activities – like walking.

It's a safe and effective solution.

You've probably come across a pair of orthotic insoles at some point.

For most of us, ***we've all been looking at the same pair.***

You know the ones I mean...

The type you see in ***any general store*** with a running or health aisle.

The pair that that's ***straight off-the-shelf.***

The 20-30 quid label for a ***one-size-fits-all*** shoe sole that looks just like your normal ones – except for the thicker heel cup the size of a good slice of cheese!

Have you ever wondered how *something everybody picks up can work for all feet?*

After all, aren't all our feet *different*?

The answer is yes!

All our feet *are* different and one insole won't suit everyone in the queue.

That's why I don't rate off-the-shelf insoles if you're serious about making changes to your health.

The orthotic insoles I recommend are *a quite a little more* specific to your feet...

You'll see what I mean...

You can't get them *just* anywhere, these are ***professionally prescribed for just you!***

They're ***specifically engineered*** by using the data from the ***exact imprint of your feet!***

And there's a choice of ***21 carefully selected activity-specific soles*** to take into account what you like to do best. Anything from high-heel shopping to long distance running or even medical conditions such as diabetes!

In short: **these insoles are made using your data <u>and your data alone.</u>**

The reason I'm both **confident and happy to recommend these orthotics** is because I see their benefits, here at the practice – everyday.

(I even have a personal pair myself).

My job is to align the spine *perfectly* so you can carry on enjoying the day without pain and problems.

But that can only happen as long as the spine remains aligned.

As we've seen, hyper pronation knocks out your alignment and affects the entire body, including the knees, lower back, balance and posture.

With these insoles, clients no longer have to worry!

They can walk out of the practice confident that the improvements to their spine will not be so easily undone!

A Quick Recap:

If you've:

- Tried the recommendations on page 7/8 but didn't get the results you wanted

  Or,

- Simply don't have time

Custom orthotics will offer you the support you're looking for without any of the leg work – excuse the pun!

As *The Orthotic Group* puts it…

'Custom orthotics work on your feet much like glasses work on your eyes - they reduce stress and strain on your body by bringing your feet back into proper alignment.'

(TOG. 2011)

That means:

- More Support **for daily activities like walking and running**
- More Safety **from common injuries caused by hyper pronation**
- More Balance **and proper alignment as your feet adapt to their new position**
- Less Stress **and strain on the body**

Even better…

This month I'm planning to focus *extra* attention on clients' feet!

That's because it's all too easy to overlook something as basic as our feet and footwear. Often, a 'bad back' or painful joint can be recovered much faster without the hindrance from imbalanced walking habits.

A simple foot alignment/ balance test early on could be the difference between a speedy recovery and a slow, drawn-out one.

If you think you could benefit from testing your own foot biometrics, then come by the practice in Penrith and we'll be happy to give you a gait-scan.

(A gait-scan visit usually retails at £30)

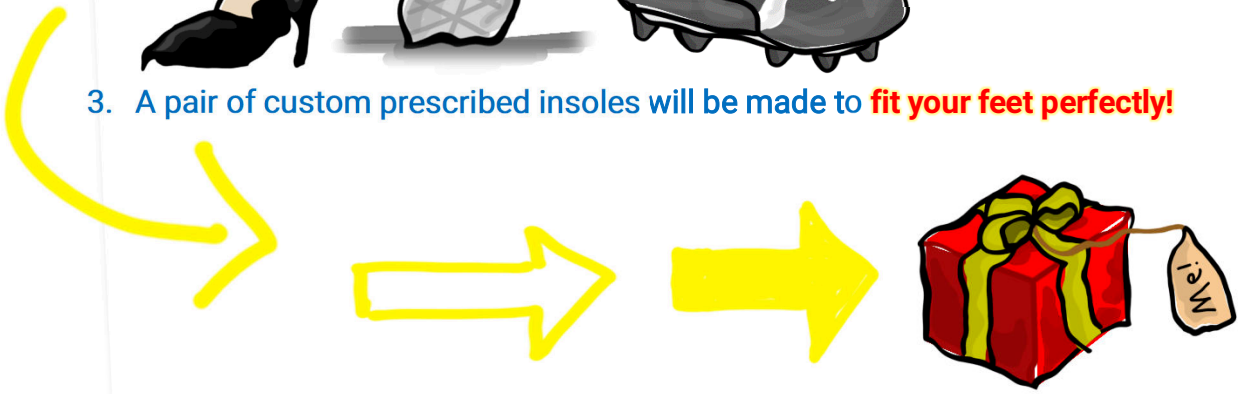
If the data comes back and confirms a problem like hyper pronation, then **TOG custom orthotic insoles will be made available for you to order.**

By ordering a pair of TOG Custom Orthotic Insoles:

1. We'll send a copy of your feet biometric data to TOG Specialists in Canada.

2. You'll have a choice of 21 different types of activity-specific insoles.

3. A pair of custom prescribed insoles will be made to **fit your feet perfectly!**



Professional custom-made insoles cost £200.

If there ever was a time to own your own pair – that time would be NOW!

This month I'm making all **gait-scan visits entirely free.**

Now, you can get an **accurate reading of your pronation at no cost!**

AND receive all the **data you need for your very own pair of custom-made insoles!**

If you're interested – check out this month's awareness offer on page 14.

Well, that's it for now.

I hope you found this useful!

And Remember: Put your feet first and the rest will follow…

Here's to days past and hopefully not to be repeated – the days when everything was just *a pain in the foot!*

Lastly, if you've read this far – thank you!

And as a final favour – please pass this on to a friend or family. Then, together we can spread local awareness.

As always,

Yours in Health,

P Bennett

Peter Bennett

BSc (Hons) DC Chiropractor

PS. Don't forget this month's Awareness offer – details on page 14!

THIS MONTH'S AWARENESS OFFER!

This month's aim is to **'get everyone on an even keel!'**

If you're suffering *unnecessarily* with your feet and are experiencing problems – like hyper pronation, then this is your chance to get a little more support from your feet…

Come by the practice and we'll **accurately measure your biometric balance and gait-cycle; *all the data you need for your very own custom orthotics!***

And for this offer only – **it will cost you nothing to find out!**

Here's how it works:

You don't have to have visited us before to take advantage of this offer – Everybody's welcome!

Just follow the steps below:

- Ring us up – ***01768 259 023***
- Say you want a **free gait-scan**
- We'll book you in ASAP
- On the day, I'll conduct the gait-scan
- We'll talk about the results and if you want custom orthotics, just let me know!

The Gait-scan is entirely free.

Valid until 31st October

Feel free to call me if you have any questions:

Between a family and a busy practice I've set aside these hours that I'll be able to take your calls.

Monday – Friday

13.30 – 15.30

Or, if you're ringing about an appointment then my lovely receptionists will be happy to help you.

Office Hours:

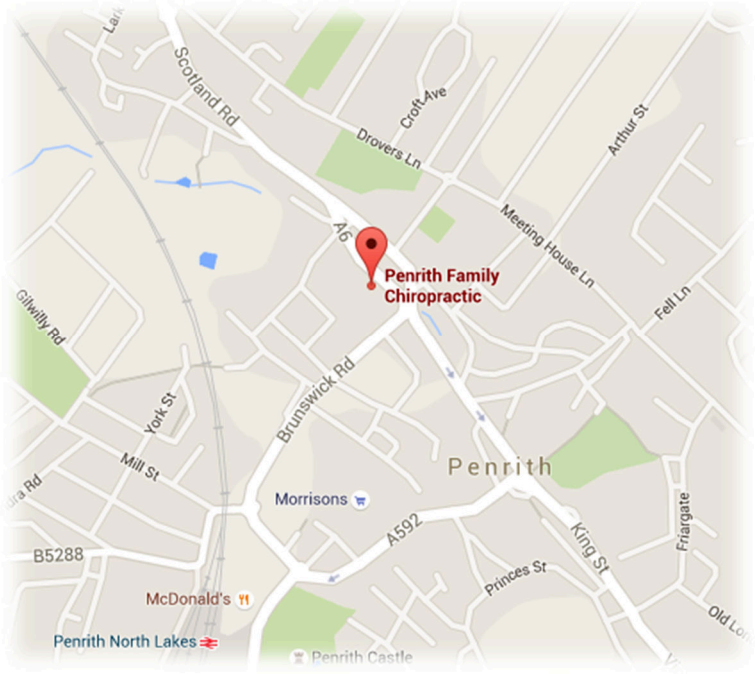
Monday – Friday

09.00 – 13.30

15.30 – 18.30

Where to find me

Penrith Family Chiropractic,
8 Duke Street,
Penrith,
Cumbria,
CA11 7LY



01768 259 023

www.penrithchiropractic.com

Bibliography

Brogan, Dylan. (2014) Spinal & Sports Care, **What Is Foot Pronation?**

https://www.spinalandsportscare.com.au/what-is-foot-pronation/

Dr. Axe, Josh. (2017) Dr.Axe.com, **Pronation Problems: Signs, Causes & Ways to Correct These Common Posture Issues**

https://draxe.com/pronation/

Dr. M. St. John, Tina. (2011) Livestrong.com, **What Are The Treatments For Fallen Arches?**

http://www.livestrong.com/article/166822-what-are-the-treatments-for-fallen-arches/

Millett, Andrew. (2016) Dr. John Rusin, **10 Exercises To Instantly Improve Ankle Mobility**

https://drjohnrusin.com/10-exercises-to-instantly-improve-ankle-mobility/

NHS. (2016) NHS Choices, **Corns And Calluses**

http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/CornsandCalluses/Pages/whatarecornsandcalluses.aspx

TOG. (2011) The Orthotic Group, **What Is A Custom Orthotic?**

http://www.theorthoticgroup.com/PatientSite/OrthoticFAQ.aspx