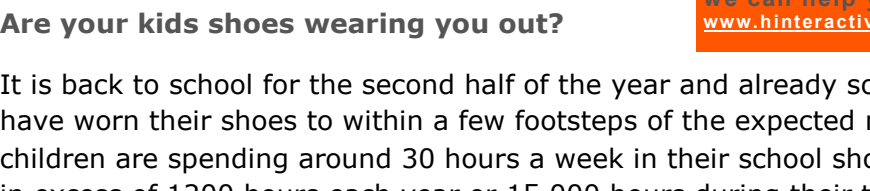




This month we take a look at our feet. From footwear to flat feet, orthotics to exercises, we will show you how to keep those important feet feeling happy and painfree. If you have any topics you would like us to cover in future newsletters, send us an email (link below).

Craig and Rebecca



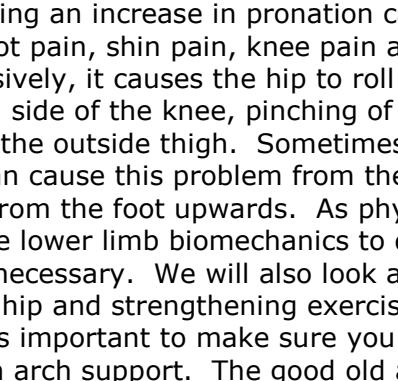
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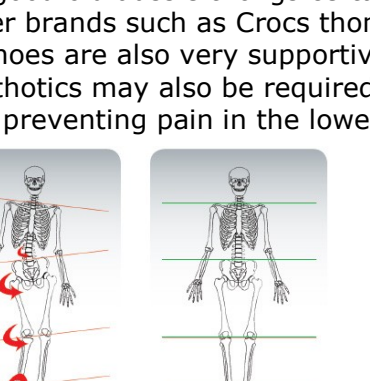
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Are your kids shoes wearing you out?

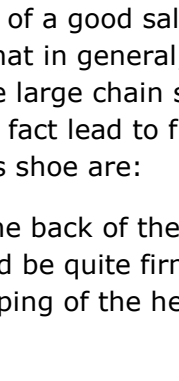
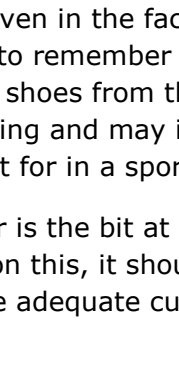
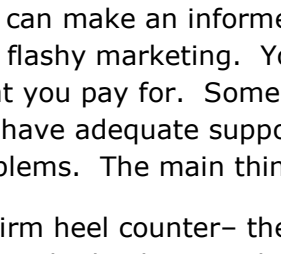
It is back to school for the second half of the year and already some children have worn their shoes to within a few footsteps of the expected mileage. Our children are spending around 30 hours a week in their school shoes, which is in excess of 1200 hours each year or 15,000 hours during their total school years! And as their feet are developing at such an incredible pace, it's imperative that kids wear school shoes specifically designed to support the requirements of their growing feet. Wearing correctly fitted school shoes reduces the risk of injury, improves comfort and can enhance performance when they are at play. Because of the greater flexibility in a child's foot compared to an adult's foot, childhood foot problems are less common than adult foot problems. That doesn't mean that foot pain and even foot injuries don't still occur when a child routinely plays hard in overly flimsy shoes. Children may not be mature enough to realize that a foot condition is developing until the pain can no longer be ignored and thus may not receive a diagnosis as early as they should. Just like adults, active kids need shoes that provide adequate arch support and heel support and absorb shock to reduce stress to joints while they exercise. The major difference between an adult's and a child's therapeutic school / running shoe is that a child's shoe tends to provide less motion control to allow little feet to continue to grow and develop without unnatural hindrance. **To read the complete article [click here](#)**



I Have Flat Feet—Help! Simple, Practical Advice



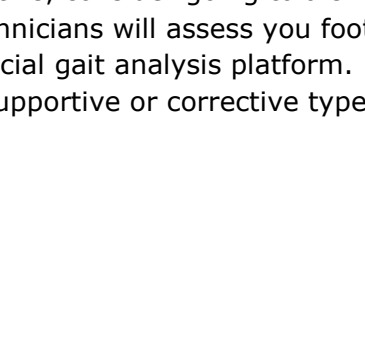
Flat (pronated) feet have lost most and sometimes all, of the arch which runs down the inside of the foot. This arch is held up by ligaments and muscles which ensure that when we walk, the foot can roll and transfer forces optimally. Having an increase in pronation can cause all sorts of problems including foot pain, shin pain, knee pain and hip bursitis. When the feet flatten excessively, it causes the hip to roll inwards. This puts strain over the medial side of the knee, pinching of the outside of the knee cap and tightening of the outside thigh. Sometimes weak gluteals (backside muscles) can cause this problem from the top downwards, rather than it being caused from the foot upwards. As physiotherapists, we always assess the whole lower limb biomechanics to determine whether orthotic intervention is necessary. We will also look at hip strength and often give stretches for the hip and strengthening exercises for the gluteals. If you have flat feet, it is important to make sure you wear footwear that is supportive and has an arch support. The good old aussie thongs certainly do not provide this support, however newer brands such as Crocs thongs provide more arch support. Birkenstock shoes are also very supportive and good for the QLD environment. Simple orthotics may also be required to assist in maintaining the arch support and preventing pain in the lower leg.



BUYING SPORTS SHOES

People are often confused about what type of sports shoe is best for their foot. There are many brands to choose from and most are very good. It is important to know the main characteristics of a good sports shoe so that you can make an informed decision, even in the face of a good salesperson and flashy marketing. You also need to remember that in general, you get what you pay for. Some of the cheap shoes from the large chain stores, do not have adequate support or cushioning and may in fact lead to further problems. The main things to look out for in a sports shoe are:

1. Firm heel counter— the heel counter is the bit at the back of the shoe where the heel sits. When you push on this, it should be quite firm. If you can easily push it in, it will not provide adequate cupping of the heel which is necessary for stability.



Good Heel Counter



Poor Heel Counter

2. Stable mid-sole—if you pick your shoe up and try and twist it like you are squeezing out a cloth, it should not twist easily. If your shoe twists in half easily, it is not providing stability to the foot.



3. Ensure that the shoe bends at the toes, not in the middle of the shoe.
4. Choose the right type of shoe and the correct last for your foot type. If you have not been assessed by a health professional who can advise you on this, consider going to a shop like The Athlete's Foot. The footwear technicians will assess your foot type at rest and while walking on their special gait analysis platform. They will then be able to recommend either a supportive or corrective type shoe.



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