

## **Why do our athletes need orthotics???**

Typically, at the start of each season we have athletes complaining of foot and ankle pain and shin splints, this is due to the position of their feet in their shoes or cleats. To solve their pain, I typically tape their feet for arch support and this fixes the problem. Proper biomechanics during the gait cycle and the bones in our skeletons are designed to be powerful. Power, speed, and agility begin at the foot and work its way up.

There are 6 stages of the gait cycle. Each joint must maximize its work capacity in order for your foot to work efficiently. The Midtarsal Joint stabilizes your foot, so the Subtalar Joint can act as an effective shock absorber, while restoring full function to your 1st Metatarsal Phalangeal Joint, helping you propel forward. If the foot is working properly, the knee, hip, back and core can maximize function and power.

The problem I am seeing is Vans, Converse, football and soccer cleats and most court shoes do not have the proper arch or heel support for our athletes feet. This puts the foot in an unstable position causing injuries such as shin splints, heel bruises, plantar fasciitis, arch pain, blisters, peroneal tendonitis, ankle sprains and knee pain.

I would like to recommend a simple orthotic if your athlete has any of these issues. I have seen the results comparing our injuries to other schools I have worked with. My personal choice is Superfeet, because of the hard ridged arch and heel cup. Superfeet orthotics are the closest thing to custom orthotics and last longer (about 1 year if worn daily) than the softer orthotics you find at the drugstores. The cost is about \$40. You can find them at most sports stores and running stores. I do not receive endorsements as a result of recommending these to you, but Fleet Feet in Aptos has agreed to donate proceeds from our purchases to the athletic department at St Francis if you choose to purchase them there.

Please let me know if you have any questions,

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Athletic Trainer