

Foot pain: Custom-made insoles offer relief

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Custom-made insoles known as foot orthoses can reduce foot pain caused by arthritis, overly prominent big toe joints and highly arched feet, a new systematic review shows.

A team of Cochrane Researchers found that custom orthoses were safe interventions for foot pain in a number of different conditions. However, more research is required to develop an in depth understanding of their effectiveness.

Approximately one in four people are affected by foot pain at any given time. It is often disabling and can impair mood, behaviour, self-care ability and overall quality of life. People suffer from foot pain for a variety of reasons, but pain is more common in the elderly and those with chronic conditions such as arthritis. In the majority of cases, patients undergo a combination of different treatments, one of which may be custom-made foot orthoses (insoles moulded to a cast of the foot).

The Cochrane Systematic Review focuses on the results of 11 trials that together involved 1,332 people. Researchers found that custom foot orthoses can relieve pain within three months in adults with rheumatoid arthritis, as well as in children with juvenile idiopathic arthritis, an early onset form of the disease. Adults with painful highly arched feet or painfully prominent big toe joints also benefited from treatment with orthoses over three and six month periods respectively.

"Custom foot orthoses can be an effective treatment for a variety of

conditions, but there are still many causes of foot pain for which the benefit of this treatment is unclear. There is also a lack of data on the long term effects of treating with orthoses," says Fiona Hawke, the lead researcher, who works at the Central Coast campus of the University of Newcastle, Australia.

Source: Wiley

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