

How-To...

TIPS:

Feet Are The Foundation

Your feet are the foundation of your body. Proper mechanical movement of the feet in walking is crucial to your body's well being.

The Hip Bone is Connected to the Thigh Bone etc.

Remember that your feet are attached to the rest of your body and if they move incorrectly, the body parts attached to the feet also move incorrectly causing damage to remote areas.

Incorrect Walking Movements

The average adult walks 5,000 to 15,000 steps per day on each side. Abnormal walking movement can cause "repetitive motion injuries" to remote body parts such as the back, hips and knees.

Gait Analysis Can Help

Video and Computerized "gait analysis" can pinpoint problems with walking that cause degenerative muscle and joint conditions and often allow one to postpone, if not eliminate, surgery.

How do you know if your feet are the problem?

Well, if pain is aggravated during or after walking or standing, you have a pretty good idea your feet are the cause. And interestingly enough, your feet don't have to hurt for this to be the case.

Choose a Health Care Practitioner *By Dr. George C. Trachtenberg*

How can you find a practitioner who can really make a difference?

You need to concentrate on outcome...a practice's consistent delivery of successful results. As such, the most important factor in the selection process is reputation. Word of mouth is one of the best ways to learn about particular practitioners. Find a person, preferable several people, who have achieved consistently good results from a practitioner. Make sure you're not involved with a practice that puts profits ahead of patient needs. Also make sure your practitioner is up-to-date on the latest knowledge and procedures, and has access to the latest technology.

Beware of "Fix-it Shop" medicine

Some would have you believe that medicine is medicine...doctors and practices offer similar care, have similar technology and deliver similar results. The truth is however, there is a great deal of difference from doctor to doctor and practice to practice. Doctors have different levels of training, knowledge and experience. In today's medicine, too many doctors are forced to adopt a "repair shop" mentality—"If someone feels poorly, give them a pill. If that doesn't help, try a different pill. If something's broken, fix it with surgery." There's often little regard for cause and effect of symptoms and treatment especially as it relates to the whole body. Additionally one must be careful of the syndrome I call "the illusion of similar services". Just because a procedure or treatment is labeled the same or appears the same, it in fact may be very different depending on the practitioner's training, experience, technology used and the skill of the practitioner. In other words not all care is equal even if it has the same name or a practitioner claims it to be the same.

How can you make sure you're getting good value for your health care dollar?

Quality and value in health care means getting an appropriate diagnosis, spending sufficient time with your doctor and achieving a successful outcome for the least amount of dollars and time. Unfortunately too many insurance-minded practices are forced to use a "cookie cutter" or assembly line approach to medicine in order to keep patient numbers high. They must see more and more patients in order to offset discounts and concessions to insurance companies. In this system, doctors can lose touch with patients. Patients often end up seeing ancillary practitioners instead of their primary doctor. Managed care plans can even restrict the type of treatment, medications or referrals a doctor can make. Loss of choice often leads to a reduction in quality and value.

Should you seek medical care outside your health plan even if it means paying out-of pocket?

Tough question. Because it means weighing the potential benefits of going off plan against any increased expense. Generally you should consider outside help if you're not getting the choices you need from your current plan, or if you're not seeing improvement in your condition. It is important to have quality health care even if it means paying for some of it yourself. There is value in a practice that meets the patient's needs and exceeds their expectations. There's value in a practice that offers the latest advances in their field. "The bottom line is results!" After all, what does it matter if your treatment is covered by insurance if your problem is not being corrected or your pain and discomfort continues?

How can you avoid the "illusion of similar services" in podiatry?

Your feet have a direct effect on other parts of the body. Because they are the foundation of the body and are attached to the leg, which is attached to the knee, which is attached to the thigh, which is attached to the hip...and so on, abnormal movement and function of the foot can actually be solely responsible for back, hip, knee and other conditions that involve joints, bones and muscles.

When abnormal foot function is treated early, serious conditions can be prevented that eventually can lead to joint replacements and other surgery. However, even if these conditions have already developed, they can often be helped and pain be alleviated as well as prevention from further deterioration accomplished.

Treatment should be geared toward bringing abnormal foot movement and function toward normalcy by utilizing sophisticated in-shoe orthotic devices. Treatment may also need to include an interdisciplinary approach by combining the walking care with physical therapy, chiropractic care, massage therapy and/or acupuncture.

A word about orthotics is needed when this approach to care is discussed. Not all orthotics are the same, and just because these in-shoe devices can look similar, does not mean that they are similar or will do the job appropriately. Back, knee, hip and other postural problems that are caused or aggravated by walking need to use unique and specialized devices that are prescribed after the patient is assessed with video and computerized walking (gait) analysis. Only then can the appropriate assessment be made that will lead to the proper prescription orthotic and treatment. This approach to care is specialized and only a handful of practitioners in the country have the unique training and equipment available in their office to make these assessments and treatment plans.

Gait Analysis takes us to a whole different realm. Strategic camera placements view the patient from front, back, profile, full body and close-up angles. All four cameras are coordinated to run simultaneously. If something is wrong in one view, we can correlate it to the rest of the body and the rest of the posture. This allows for detailed, slow motion analysis and critical evaluation.

Along with the video, mylar pads, placed inside the shoe, feature 960 sensors which can provide thousands of pieces of information. It's like doing an EKG of the foot. In essence, it gives us a look inside the shoe while a person is actually walking. We can see what's happening based on time, force and pressure...Compare one foot to the other...Before and after treatment. Because we can look at a problem clinically, with Xray, video and computer, we can correlate an incredible amount of information, isolate foot and related problems and formulate effective treatment methods.

To summarize, video and computer information allows abnormal foot function to be evaluated and its influence on other parts of the body are determined. The result is effective treatment of most foot and posture-related conditions without surgery.

My practice is the first in the region to provide this type of service and over the years we have seen very remarkable and reproducible results with hundreds of patients.



Dr. George C. Trachtenberg is a podiatrist in Vestal, NY.

He specializes in video and computerized gait analysis that evaluates postural effects of walking that can lead to disorders that can affect the knees, hips and back.

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