

## Orthotic Arch Support Break-In Protocol

It is important that you understand that we are changing your body's posture and alignment. By changing the way you walk, we can cause dramatic changes in both the position of your joints, as well as increase your muscle balance and stability. Your postural imbalance is the underlying reason for your problem(s) and we believe that the best way to alleviate this is to correct these imbalances. Our goal is to increase your ability to walk, run, or perform in life or sports better and pain-free.

Your ICON ORTHOTICS cause immediate positional changes in the bones and it will take time for your muscles to "rebalance" and gain strength in this new position. While your muscles rebalance **during the break in period**, you will begin to notice changes not only in your feet and legs, but in your entire body as well. This initial period usual lasts from two to eight weeks.

### We suggest the following break in period:

Wear your ICON ORTHOTICS a total of 2 - 4 hours today, and increase the time you wear them by 1 – 2 hours a day. It usually takes one to two weeks to become completely used to wearing your orthotics but this time can differ from person to person. Most people can wear the orthotics full time in 3-5 days.

- ✓ You should start each day with your orthotics in your shoes.
- ✓ The time you wear your orthotics counts whether you are standing or sitting. This is because the orthotic holds your foot in it's neutral position and your foot and muscles will become used to this position whether you are walking or not.
- ✓ If you received full length orthotics, you should remove any insole from inside any shoes or sneakers before placing your orthotics in the shoe. Remember to put the insoles back when you take the orthotics out each day during the break in period.
- ✓ When you buy new shoes or sneakers, **always** bring your orthotics with you to be sure the shoes fit with your orthotics. Remember to remove the insole from the shoe if possible. Remember to buy shoes late in the day because everyone's feet swell by the end of the day.
- ✓ If during the break in period you forget to take your orthotics out and mistakenly wear them too long and you become uncomfortable (your arches, legs or knees may feel like you "over did it"), you may decide not to wear them the next day. This is a mistake! Not wearing them the next day, at least half as many hours as you wore them the day you forgot to take them out, will aggravate your muscles as they are being put into extremes of position. (This is very rare.)
- ✓ Until you become used to the feeling of wearing your orthotics, do not exercise in them. In most cases this usually takes a minimum of four or five days. For runners, we recommend waiting a minimum of 2 – 3 weeks to give your muscles a chance to adapt to this new position.

**Please follow the break in protocol.** It is based on over thirty years experience and thousands of pairs of orthotics. If you do not, you may experience some unnecessary discomfort such as excessive muscular and joint soreness. This usually does not cause significant problems, but may prolong the time it takes you to get comfortable and completely satisfied with your custom orthotics.

If you have any questions don't hesitate to call Family Foot & Ankle Specialists. That is what we are here for. You will be given a follow up appointment where we will do three things; ask your opinion of changes you have noticed, evaluate your progress, and make any necessary adjustments to your orthotic arch supports to ensure you achieve the best possible result.

## THE BIOMECHANICAL ADVANTAGE

ICON ORTHOTICS prepared these biomechanical orthotics specifically for your feet according to the design requirements of your doctor. Don't let appearances fool you. What appears to be a simple piece of curved plastic is the most advanced and effective external foot prescription available today. Your biomechanical orthotics combines state-of-the-art technology with the finest high-performance materials. They are based on a new understanding of the function of the foot. Your healthcare provider has taken advanced training in this field and has used his knowledge and experience to create these orthotics for you.

What does all this mean to you? It means that your feet can begin to operate in a more natural and efficient manner. As a result, you will feel a definite improvement in the area of your feet, legs, hips and even your lower back. Related corns, calluses, aches and pains usually diminish and disappear.

## GETTING YOU STARTED

When you first wear your orthotics, expect to feel different. This is quite normal. ICON ORTHOTICS will change the way you walk. This sensation should disappear within a few weeks. After approximately two to eight weeks, you will probably no longer even notice you are wearing your orthotics. As with any medical appliance, your body must adjust to their use.

We recommend you break them in slowly by wearing them as instructed on the first page and increasing the wear time in small amounts until you can wear them all day long. Most patients wear the orthotics full time in three to five days. The slower you start the easier the break-in period will be.

Do not hurry your treatment by trying to wear your orthotics as long as you can at first. Because some muscles are contracting earlier and some are contracting later, making the changes too rapidly will cause cramping and fatigue as well as arch pain. Sometimes a strange feeling can occur in other parts of the foot, legs and back, after you begin wearing your orthotics. This is usually a sign that your orthotics are working for you. However, this can also be a sign that your body is resisting rapid change. If the discomfort becomes acute, you can either consult your podiatrist for a possible adjustment or cut the break-in times in half and build up more slowly.

ICON ORTHOTICS are fully adjustable and can usually be adjusted right in the office and returned to you immediately. Sometimes they will have to be mailed back to the lab if grinding or major modification is needed.

ICON ORTHOTICS are undoing damage that took years to make. Listen to your feet and please be patient.

## USUAL BREAK-IN PERIOD

We expect changes in you to occur over time and in most cases, that time is predictable. You will go through three phases. During the first two weeks, you will start to acclimate to wearing the orthotics and *your body will adjust to this change in position*. During the second phase, we expect steady improvement in the main problems you have that led to your doctor prescribing Icon Orthotics. During this phase your muscles will rebalance. This usually lasts from the second to the eighth week. You may have some aches and pains, but they should not be significant or get progressively worse and quite the opposite, this phase is characterized by you becoming more stable and more comfortable in the way you walk and stand. The third and last phase of the break-in period is all about becoming stronger in this new position. Most people notice some obvious improvement in strength stamina and stability. This can manifest itself in many ways, from you no longer having pain in your feet to your body feeling great. The basic idea is that you should have some measure of improved efficiency, with less overall discomfort. This usually takes from eight to sixteen weeks.

## CARE OF YOUR ORTHOTICS

Your orthotics require minimal care, but there are some situations to avoid:

- ✓ Avoid hot areas such as car dashboards, home heaters and dryers.
- ✓ Keep away from pets that could chew on the plastic.
- ✓ Wear socks or stockings with orthotics to wick away moisture.

Orthotics can be cleaned with a mild soap or detergent and the soft cloth or sponge. Let them air dry thoroughly before replacing them into your shoes.

If any squeaking sound occurs when walking, sprinkle foot or baby powder into the shoe. For sneakers and running shoes apply a single layer of cloth adhesive tape to the bottom of the heel and across the ball of the foot at the end of the plastic. With many new sneaker designs the inside of the sneakers are slippery. Squeaking is a sign that you are twisting in the shoe and this usually goes away after a few days. If your orthotics begin to squeak after several weeks, this is usually a sign of a change in your bodies balance and you should return for an adjustment or an evaluation of how you are walking differently than the wear pattern on your shoes is used to. Changing to new shoes usual resolves this.

## SHOES AND YOUR ORTHOTICS

Your shoes work in close relationship with your orthotics. Obviously, care must be exercised in choosing the appropriate footwear. Always take your orthotics with you when you shop for shoes. Find shoes that fit and hold the entire foot snugly without squeezing excessively in any area. Severe pronators should use shoes with a firm heel counter or sneakers designed for added stability. Avoid shoes with any tilt in the shoe bed. Ask your podiatrist or shoe vendor for more information.

Often time's new shoes will slip in the heels with your orthotics. This is a desirable trait because the arch is held in greater support by the new shoe and a little slippage will further balance your calf muscles. You will adjust to this in a few days. Do not buy shoes that slip so much they won't stay on. If you have any questions ask the doctor.

Avoid a fit that is either too loose or too tight. Your orthotics should fit in easily without binding or being wedged against the side of the shoe. Sometimes, when you first get the orthotic, the top cover is too long. They can be easily trimmed with scissors to properly fit in your shoe. If you are unsure how to do this, return to the office to have the top covers trimmed.

Shoes with a removable insert are preferable because without the shoe insert there is additional room for the orthotic. Other shoes may have an inner lining that is spot glued and can similarly be removed after you purchase them. Usually the lace-up type shoes (with moderate to deep heels) are the best. For example, walking shoes, running shoes and oxfords. It's best to avoid slip-ons, backless shoes, and heel heights greater than the 1 1/2 inches, unless your orthotics were specifically designed for those shoe types. We have found that most patients can wear a greater variety of shoes more comfortably once they acclimate to the new position the orthotics put them in.

Some shoes with a higher heel will cause the orthotic to rock in the shoe. This can make you walk out of the back of your shoes. A simple adjustment can be made in your podiatrist's office to fix this problem.

Diabetics and people with decreased sensation in their feet should be especially careful not to have foreign objects in their shoes and not too overly compressed their feet. These patients should check their feet daily for sore areas and consult their podiatrist immediately if they do occur.

We at Family Foot & Ankle Specialists wish you many happy, healthy, and comfortable miles of walking with your new biomechanical orthotics. If you have any other questions not covered here, please don't hesitate to ask!