Caring for your Orthotics

I. The importance of proper care

Proper care of your orthotics and stretching is important for effectiveness and longevity of your inserts.

II. Orthotic care includes

(1). *Break -in period*
(2). *When to wear*
(3). *Cleaning*
(4). *Stretching*
(5). *Proper footwear*
(6). *Precautions*

(1). How to break-in your orthotics

*Your Orthotics are **custom made** to your feet and will change lower extremity mechanics. A gradual break-in period is advised. Changing how your foot works and change in the fit of your shoe, may cause <u>pressure</u> and require building a tolerance for the new orthotic.*
Start with 1-2 hours on the first day, and add 1 hour per day as tolerated. Once inserts can be tolerated for 6-8 hour periods, they may be worn for activities.

(2). When to wear your orthotics

Once your break-in period is completed, wear your inserts as much as possible to protect foot and lower extremity. Once symptoms have abated, other footwear without orthotics can be worn, but 80% of time should be spent in orthotic footwear.

(3).   *Cleaning your orthotics*

Mild detergent and warm water may be used to keep inserts clean and odor free. Applying Scotch-guard to inserts when they are new, will keep appearance and prevent absorption of dirt and odors. Powder can be used as desired.

(4).   *Stretching*

Ankle range of motion is critical for tolerance of inserts and improved lower extremity mechanics.

(5).   *Footwear*

Depending on the type of insert prescribed, your diagnosis, and your current footwear choices, you may need to obtain different footwear. Shoes can be recommended which will help provided you with added features that will protect your feet and allow for faster healing.

(6).   *Precautions*

If inserts are not properly broken in as described above, you could run the risk of soreness, blisters, or even ulcers. If you are Diabetic, you should inspect your feet for redness and/or irritation, as impaired sensation/circulation may predispose you to skin breakdown if break-in period is done incorrectly.