

Lower Back Pain

Many people will, at some time in their life, experience a period of lower back pain.

Ongoing back pain can be really debilitating, so if you experience lower back pain

frequently, even if it is not severe, it should be addressed before it does become so.

There are many causes of lower back pain. These include structural misalignment,

hereditary disorders, disc degeneration in the spine, nerve damage, muscle imbalance

and dysfunction of the lower back / pelvic region caused by poor timing or function of the

feet and legs when walking.

Very often it is a combination of a number of these factors and that's why if only one area is treated the condition improves but doesn't completely resolve.

Timing issues of foot function

Walking should be a fluid motion from the time the heel hits the ground through to the point where we step forward and off the foot. Sometimes, if the forefoot and especially the big toe joint becomes jammed, the forward movement is blocked for a very short time, forcing other joints to compensate. The blockage is not significant in itself, but it recurs with every step and this repetition, in a throughout normal day's walking, is enough to place the strain and stress on the muscles and joints that leads leading to inflammation and increased risk of injury. You can test this out yourself by starting to walking and then purposefully stopping just before you step off. Watch out, be careful you don't fall over!

Poor function of the foot due to excessive rolling-in or (pronation)

If the your foot works in an excessively rolled in position, especially as your it lifts off the ground, it causes the leg to remain in an internal rotator position, resulting in a forward tilt of the pelvis which in turn increases the curvature of the spine and places strain on the muscles and ligaments of the lower back.

Poor function of the foot due to leg length difference

Most people have a slight difference in the length of each leg but if this becomes marked through dysfunction of the pelvis or injury and sometimes surgery, (for example hip surgery), it will force the foot to compensate. Usually this causes one foot to function rolled-in and the other to function in a rolled-out position. This places strain on the foot, leg and pelvis and may result in a pelvic tilt and twisting of the spine, placing strain on the associated muscle and ligaments.

Treatment options

In cases where you suspect, the way your foot and leg works is having an impact on your lower back pain, it is best to have the podiatrist work together with the health professional of your choice. This may be your osteopath, physiotherapist, chiropractor, myotherapist or massage therapist.

Marked improvements can be achieved over time when working with other health professionals to address the issues occurring around the lower back such as joint dysfunction and muscle imbalance.

At The Foot Guru's at Total Care Podiatry, the podiatrist will need to ascertain what dysfunction is occurring in your feet, how this is interacting with the muscles in your back, pelvis and legs and will see what areas in your lifestyle may be placing you at risk of continuing the injury, for example your sport, posture and even footwear.

The new, fully corrective orthotics that work on assisting the foot to place the body weight through the foot so that it is in the right place at the right time. These orthotics should significantly improve the foot and leg function.

Please note: this advice is very general and an accurate diagnosis on the function of your legs and feet can only be made after consulting a podiatrist.