

# A guide to your insoles



## What is an insole?

An insole is an orthotic device which is placed inside a shoe, beneath the foot.

Their purpose is to enhance the biomechanics and alignment of the foot - they do not change the foot position. Insoles can be made from a variety of different materials depending on your needs.

## What does an insole do?

An insole is often provided for a number of reasons, including:

- To reduce pain by altering the biomechanics of gait
- To realign your foot and ankle when walking
- To redistribute areas of pressures on the foot
- To increase support and stability
- To control movement and joints

## How do you wear insoles?

They should be inserted into your normal shoes. Your orthotist will show you how to do this correctly, but as a general rule follow these guidelines:

1. If there is a removable insole inside your shoe, remove it.
2. Check that there are no objects in the shoe, or on the sole of the shoe.
3. Insert the insole into the shoe and check the flat base is sitting flat inside the shoe, with the heel flush against the back of the shoe.
4. Insert your foot into the shoe.
5. Once the shoe and insole is on, tap your heel to the back of the shoe and fasten the laces, or Velcro®, securely.

You should always wear socks or tights when wearing insoles.

## **Do you need to buy special shoes?**

No, insoles can be worn in your normal shoes. Sometimes you may need to go up a size to accommodate the insoles, and we recommend selecting shoes with laces or Velcro fastening.

It is important that all your footwear has the same heel height. Slip-on shoes are not appropriate.

Wearing specialist corrective running shoes with insoles may result in over correction and cause pain. Initial signs to look for include sore knees and hips.

## **How long should you wear insoles for?**

Your orthotist will advise how long you should wear your insoles for. It takes a while to get used to wearing insoles, and they may feel slightly uncomfortable at first. Gradually build up the length of wear time, until you can wear as required.

Day 1: 30-60 minutes

Day 2: 1-2 hours

Day 3: 2-4 hours

Day 4-7: 4-6 hours

Week 2: 6+ hours, starting to become comfortable

It is important that you increase your usage time whilst doing your day-to-day routine, so make sure you aren't sitting for long periods. If you are not active whilst getting used to your insoles, it will take much longer for your feet to get used to them.

## **Is it painful to wear insoles?**

No, it should not be painful to wear insoles/heel cups. It is normal to experience some aching at first, however any discomfort should go away as you become accustomed to wearing the insoles.

## Do I need to watch out for anything?

You should frequently check your feet for rubs or marks, especially when the insoles are new. Some red marks are normal and should fade within 15 minutes. If the marks do not fade, or if you see any blistering or sores, you should stop wearing the insoles and contact your orthotist. Similarly, if your big toe joint hurts or seems to lock when you are walking, book an appointment to get checked over.

You should also check the device itself for cracks or general wear and tear.

## Caring for your insoles

Like any footwear, the lifespan of insoles depends on how often they are worn, the intensity of the activity they are used for, and how well they are cared for.

You can prolong the life of your insoles by keeping them clean and dry. Your insoles will air out best if slipped slightly out of your shoes between use.

To clean your insoles, brush them clean or wipe them lightly with a damp cloth. Do not soak the insoles. Do not machine wash or dry the insoles, nor dry clean. Do not expose the insoles to excessive heat; for example, do not dry them on top of a radiator or by a fire.

