



Footwear – Why it is the Foundation of Balance **By Bartholomew H. Faherty, C.Ped,O.S.T**

One of the consequences of Polio is diminished muscle bands in the legs and feet. Some of these bands control the ability to balance. Whether you have managed to avoid braces or are currently wearing braces, shoes are the foundation in stability.

Shoes that have soft soles on them are like standing on your bed mattress. The sponginess allows rotation of the shoe, causing the body to shift, making it harder to keep ones balance. In the old days, footwear had leather soling on the bottom. This didn't have cushioning, but was a stable platform. Modern footwear has basically blown rubber outsoles. Rubber is an oil product. In order to make manufacturing more profitable, increased amounts of air are being used in outsole materials. This economic change has resulted in a significant decrease in the stability of the product.

The fitting of footwear is important. All shoes are custom sized to the manufacturing specifications. This makes buying footwear a challenge – no size 8 is like another size 8. Shoes come in pairs. Your feet are *not* a pair; you get a right and a left. Use, gravity and injury change the shape of your feet. You can't even accurately check your shoe length on yourself because when you bend over, your toes contract (to help you keep balance) and this shortens your foot. Having a professional do your fitting is always a better way of getting the correct size. We recommend that anyone needing orthotics; (Polio survivors in particular) always seek out a reputable company who has a Board Certified Pedorthist (C.Ped.) available – who is supervising and training those who will be fitting you.

Properly made and installed custom alterations, wedges, flares, braces and orthotics help keep the foot more perpendicular to the ground, making it easier to keep the body in centerline. This can help your balance.

About Our Business

Since we opened in 1959 as a children's shoe store we've specialized in structured shoes that fit properly. Over the years we've added to our normal service expertise with the addition of orthopedics, children and adults, and many different Orthotic devices,.

Our staff has had the privilege of being part of the front runners of pedorthics, orthotic manufacturing, and the culmination of knowledge from 3 generations in shoe alteration, design, and fitting

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