

Men's Health

Active
FOOT & ANKLE
CARE CENTER
World-class foot, ankle & lower leg care

Dr. Richard T. Braver
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checkup Gait keepers

Orthotics can eliminate pain and help you run faster



**GIVE BACK
PAIN THE BOOT
BY MAKING A
CUSTOMIZED
SHOE INSERT
PART OF
YOUR TRAINING PLAN.**

Sometimes when your lower back aches, the cause of the pain can be found farther south—in your feet. “A lot of people have minor structural problems with their feet that can trigger major discomfort, things like heel pain, knee aches, shinsplints and back problems,” says Richard Braver, D.P.M., a sports podiatrist in Englewood, N.J. Slipping special inserts, called orthotics, into your shoes for foot support can compensate.

Unlike over-the-counter shoe inserts of the Dr. Scholl's vari-

ety, which are adequate to cushion a callus, custom-made orthotics are designed to compensate for structural problems within the foot, such as fallen arches. Made of polypropylene or graphite and rubber, an orthotic might be used as a wedge to position your foot at a certain angle to stop it from *pronating*, a common problem where the foot rolls inward, causing knee and back pain.

A sports podiatrist can determine what type of orthotic you need by examining your feet and looking at how your shoes wear. Some, like Dr. Braver, take videos of your stride to pinpoint problems. From there, the doctor makes a plaster cast of your feet and molds the orthotics around the models. Most orthotics are made of a lightweight carbon-fiber or plastic material, covered with a soft padding and then vinyl. Costs range from \$300 to \$500, including the examination visit. For more information or to find a doctor in your area, call the American Academy of Podiatric Sports Medicine at (800) 438-3355.