

The page features a decorative graphic consisting of three overlapping blue circles of varying sizes, arranged in a descending diagonal line from the top right towards the bottom right. Two thin, light blue lines intersect at the top left corner, forming a large 'V' shape that frames the circles.

Lower Back Pain

Common Lower Limb Functional Disorders

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SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Certainly lower back pain can develop for a large number of reasons. You may have incorrectly lifted a heavy weight or tripped and quickly tried to prevent yourself from falling or spend all your working day at a desk but sit on a poorly supportive chair.

However, the type of lower back pain that is connected to the posture of your feet is pain that develops quickly whenever you spend even short periods of time standing, walking or running. This pain quickly settles when you are off your feet.

There are two main scenarios associated with this type of lower back pain. First, is where the lower back can be placed under strain when both your feet are equally excessively flattening and second, is where one foot only is excessively flattening.

A tell tale sign of excessive flattening of the feet are the wear marks on the bottom inside edge of the heel on your shoes. The wear marks for both feet excessively flattening shows up on the inside bottom of both heels of your shoes.

Whereas, for the one foot only flattening scenario, a single wear mark develops on the inside heel of your shoe only on this single flattening foot.

WHAT'S GOING ON?

As with the song “Your hip bone’s connected to you thigh bone...” In the first scenario, with both your feet excessively flattening, your legs will rotate inwardly too much which will cause your pelvis to tilt forward on the hip joints. Therefore, when standing for long times, this places your lower spine under tremendous strain as your body attempts to control its centre of gravity to keep you balanced and upright.

Such stresses and strains, due to this imbalance, cause the joints of your lower back to be over-loaded and the supportive local muscle groups in your spine will be over worked. Since nerve trunks emerge from your spinal column and intertwine with these strained muscles then the ache from impinged nerves can be excruciating.

Also, in this first scenario, your lower back develops an excessive inward curvature. This curvature is called **Lordosis**. The symptoms are usually centralised in the lower back where you are unable differentiate which side of the lower back is more painful.

In the second scenario, one of your feet will usually flatten too much but for two separate reasons.

Either one of your legs is longer than the other,

Or,

Your spine has an abnormal twist along its length causing one hip to be higher than the other in a condition called flexible **Scoliosis**.

The spinal condition of flexible Scoliosis causes your legs and feet to function as if you are walking around a small hill in the one direction. The patho-mechanics that strain the lower back in Scoliosis are quite complicated but the resultant pain is usually the indicator of this condition. You not only have the centralised pain but you are also able to indicate a preference for your right or left hand side of your lower back that bothers you the most.

HOW IS IT TREATED?

In both these lower back pain scenarios it is important to provide good custom foot orthotic control as the basis to help resolve the symptoms. The orthoses required in the case of both feet excessively flattening need an equal corrective prescription manufactured into the devices to influence the Lordosis of the lower spine. This new spinal position will require about 4 to 6 weeks for you to become accustomed to. However, as each day passes then you feel more and more benefit and much less pain.

With the second scenario, the orthoses on the flattened side associated with a shorter leg condition requires a prescription that will both support this arch to balance your foot and possibly a heel raise to make up for the shortness of your leg.

With the flexible Scoliosis condition then no heel raise is required just a good supportive prescription to balance the one excessively flat foot.