

The Biomechanics Log Book

A VIEW FROM THE FOOT

When I first started in practice I needed a solution to help coordinate my clinic in receiving balance payments and dispensing prescription foot orthoses to my patients.

I came up with my biomechanics log book. I trust once you have read this newsletter you will be inspired to establish one of these log books yourself.

Have you ever ordered up a set of custom foot orthoses and it is a few weeks later and you are wondering;

When did I send that order to the laboratory for Mrs. O'Reilly?

Did it arrive back from the Lab or has it gone missing in the post?

I know I was off sick two days, did the devices come in and did the secretary collect the balance payment when they dispensed them to the patient?

The biomechanics log book is my simple administrative solution to these problems.

How I Do Things

My staff knows that all my patients to whom I prescribe custom foot orthoses will be seen for a standard follow up appointment 8 weeks following their bio-mechanical examination.

This allows my clinic between 2 to 3 weeks to order the orthoses, have them made by the laboratory and returned to the practice for dispensing to my patient.

The additional 5 to 6 weeks allows the patient the correct amount of time to undertake a structured breaking-in period in order to get used to their devices.

Organizing The Correct Payment Of Patient Fees

As a service to my patients, at the end of their biomechanical consultation, I will always offer two methods for them to pay my fee.

Full payment option.

This includes my biomechanical examination fee plus the full fee for their prescription foot orthoses.

Partial payment option.

This allows the patient to pay a deposit against their overall total and then pay the balance the day they come back to collect their foot orthoses.

I will usually recommend the patient pays a minimum deposit amount that will at least cover the laboratory fee for the manufacture of their prescription foot orthoses. On the rare occasion that a patient never comes back then at least I am not left to shell out the laboratory fee from my own pocket.

What Data To Collect?

I use a small hand diary to log these patients with the following headings to be noted

No. 1	
Name;	Ms Mary O'Reilly (Child, mum Ellen)
Address;	12 Connaught Street Liberties Dublin 1
Tel;	087 1234567 8823114 (w) 2030405 (h)
Date;	Bio exam June 15 th 2007 (1 st pair)
Payment	Deposit €----- Balance owed €----- Paid in full €-----
Contacted	June 25 th devices here and patient Contacted by MB, Mum will collect by end of week

The Uses Of Collecting This Data

Immediately any member of staff can go to this book and see if the patient or guardian has been contacted and if yes, by whom (MB my secretary Mary Brady) and when (June 25th) and the message received (Mum will collect devices by the end of the week).

Once the person comes to collect devices then the book tells any member of staff the status of this patients account. Have they paid in full?, if they left a deposit and any amount due? My practice policy is never to dispense devices without full settlement of fees due.

For the longer term, at the end of each year I will calculate the total number of biomechanical examinations I performed over a twelve month period and the number of 1st or 2nd pair orders. Sometimes this data is useful to see how much the biomechanical aspect of my practice has grown especially if I undertook any practice promotional work during the year.

Every so often I would also use this book to analyze for patients that I might not have seen for a long time and I would tag these patients on my computerized postal reminder system. The interesting thing is periodically I have patients who absolutely loves their prescription orthoses but has been putting a second pair order on the long finger. A postal reminder from my office is all it might take for this patient to return and order a second pair for other shoes.

Mr. Scullion is a podiatric surgeon and has been in private practice in Castlknock, Dublin 15 since 1984
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He is a former guest lecturer in lower limb biomechanics for the MSc in Sports Medicine at Trinity College, Dublin.

He also is the biomechanical consultant for Biomechanics Foot Laboratory Ltd. www.biomechanicsfootlab.com

