



Next Step Newsletter

Next Step
Physical Therapy
(516) 681- 8070
nextsteppt.com
October, 2009

Giving you information and answers to any physical therapy, health or fitness related questions

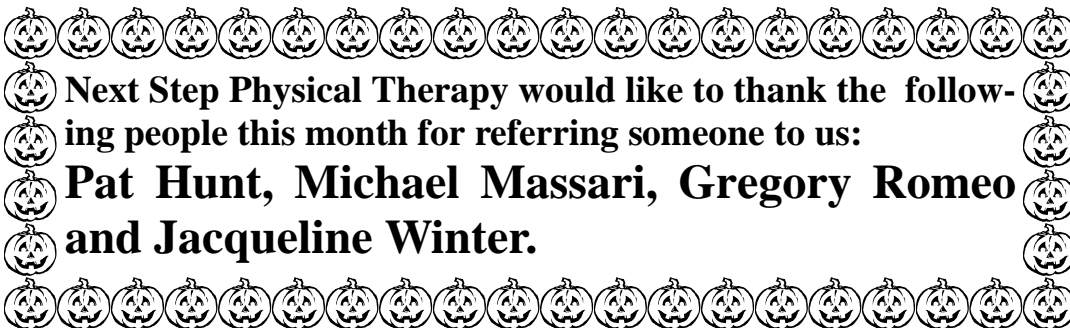
Not all feet are created equal!

Not all feet are created equal. In fact, some are vastly different than others. When you think about the constant pounding we put our feet through you can understand why small differences can create big problems.

Our feet are the first thing that touches the ground and the first part of your body that has to deal with the forces of impact that occur when you take a step. Fortunately for us, feet are designed to handle that impact. The heel bone (calcaneus) is considered the hardest, most dense bone in your body. That's important because it has to deal with the weight of your body impacting on it every step you take. Your foot also has an accumulation of fat on the bottom of the foot to help absorb shock as well as five toes to help distribute the forces throughout the entire surface of the foot. A healthy foot should be sturdy but flexible, with toes that can assist the foot to handle the body's weight.

How do different feet cause different problems? Overly flexible feet, often called pronated feet, do not offer enough resistance to the forces created by each step because they "flatten" out too easily. This loss of the natural arch of the foot can cause problems like plantar fasciitis or shin splints. Overly rigid feet, often high-arched feet, can also be a problem. A small amount of arch loss when you step onto the ground is normal, and is a major way the foot absorbs shock. An overly rigid foot doesn't do this and allows too much of the force to continue up the foot and leg. These types of feet may be prone to ankle sprains or ankle tendonitis. Finally, don't forget the importance of your toes. They can help distribute forces and bear some of your weight. A condition like "hammer toes" causes the toes to lift off the ground and prevents them from being able to reach the floor when the foot is flat. That means the foot, particularly right below the toes, has to bear more of the weight, often causing foot pain.

I hope this gives you a little more insight into the importance of your feet. If you think you may have a problem with your feet or if you have one of the conditions listed above, please call us because we can help you with this type of a problem.



**Next Step Physical Therapy would like to thank the following people this month for referring someone to us:
Pat Hunt, Michael Massari, Gregory Romeo
and Jacqueline Winter.**

C.H. asks: "If I have flat feet, what can I do to improve my foot?"

Great question!

The idea would be to improve or correct the arch. The best way to do that would be to get evaluated for an orthotic to wear in your shoes. In addition, we could also give you exercises that would help strengthen the muscles that support the arch. Certain ankle and toe muscles aid in supporting the arch and can be strengthened to improve support. Just remember that all feet aren't equal, and neither are orthotics, so don't buy one without first consulting with us.

Updates

Welcome to the Next Step Newsletter!

Win a pair of movie tickets!!

The first 2 people to call us with the answer to this question wins a pair of movie tickets... .

Why are the toes important when we take a step?

- If you have a friend or family member that you think could use our help please let us know or have them call us.
- If you would like more information on any of the topics discussed here please give us a call.
- If you have a question that you would like to have answered (maybe in the next newsletter) please don't hesitate to call.
- What topics are you interested in and would like to see in the newsletter? Let us know.

(516) 681 - 8070