

Pedorthists Play an Important Role in Foot Health

If the structural integrity of a building is dependent upon its foundation, then the foot must truly be the human body's foundation. The foot's framework is constructed of 26 bones (a quarter of all of the bones in the human body) paired with 33 joints and over 100 muscles, tendons and ligaments. Together these individual components are responsible for supporting the entire weight of the body and during the average lifetime may carry the body 155,000 miles or more.

While feet are often taken for granted, those individuals with a lower extremity amputation realize the important part they play in everyday life. Therefore, it is imperative to the individual with a lower limb amputation that the remaining foot be kept as healthy as possible for obvious reasons. One of the primary ways to prevent injury to the foot is by establishing a xxxxx with a certified pedorthist who can assist the individual with the care of the foot.

Certified pedorthists (C.Ped.) are professionals concerned with foot care and the proper fitting of shoes and orthoses. Pedorthists can take diagnoses, prescriptions, foot casts, tracings—and by careful consideration, translate them into a custom foot orthotic or shoe. They determine what orthoses or shoe would be most beneficial for the individual by taking measurements of range of motion and degrees of varus. And, they factor in the patient's weight, activity level, and other physical factors to assist in deciding what materials to use in fabrication, postings, positioning of reliefs, etc.

To understand the role that pedorthists can play in the care of the remaining foot, one first needs to know what the most common reasons for a lower extremity amputation are. Most lower-limb amputations in middle-aged or elderly persons are related to either poor circulation or loss of protective sensation in the foot, or a combination of both. Therefore, the individual with an amputation must realize that the possibility of a second amputation exists and must act to prevent this from happening.

GLENN: Please give me some information or a quote about how a pedorthist can help with foot health and prevent the second limb from being amputated. Feel free to fill-in or revise anything else you see in this article.

Pedorthists are found in all areas of the shoe and orthotic industry. Many pedorthists work for orthotic and prosthetic companies, or for podiatrists, casting and evaluating patients. Others work in a retail environment fitting people with minor foot conditions. And, some pedorthists manufacture footwear and orthotic devices in central fabrication facilities. Regardless of where pedorthists are found, they play an important role in foot health.