

Arthritis in the Foot

Artho means *joint* and **itis** means *inflammation*. There are approximately 38 causes of arthritis and most of these conditions affect the human foot. The most common of these conditions is **Osteoarthritis**. This is the simple wearing away of the cartilage of the joints as they are loaded under a great deal of mechanical stress. Age, excessive weight, ill-fitting shoes, poorly functioning foot mechanics and previous trauma (injury) are the basic causes of Osteoarthritis. Fortunately, Osteoarthritis is very treatable.

Gout and **Rheumatoid Arthritis** are the two most crippling kinds of arthritis and present considerably more treatment challenges.

In most cases, simple aches and pains of the feet are usually biomechanical. The bone structure of the foot is not being supported as well as it should be. This puts abnormal forces on the bones and joints of the foot increasing their wear and tear.

The first line of defense is **Custom-Made Foot Orthoses**. Properly designed orthoses help support the normal structure of the arch. This restores the natural relationship of the bones and alleviates abnormal stress on the joints. Custom-Made Orthotics are especially important in treating an arthritic foot because they can be formed to its often unique shape. A very good shock absorbing interface material (such as silicon gel) is very important to decrease the forces acting on the joints.

The second line of defense for painful feet is to get a [well-supported shoe](#). These shoes provide stability and support to the foot through a firm heel counter and a supportive, well designed last (sole pattern).

Several good anti-inflammatory medications are available to treat the inflammation and pain of Osteoarthritis. Ask your doctor to suggest an appropriate type, as well as other therapeutic modalities to relieve the pain in the short term.