

Foot Notes

Getting The Support You Need—In Your Shoes

(NAPSA)—Because of the shoes they wear, about two out of every three persons' feet hurt at some point in their lives. In many cases this has to do with shoes that favor style over function, but it's not necessary to compromise on fashion in order to be comfortable.

No matter what type of activity you're doing on your feet—walking, running, aerobics, shopping, working, etc.—you need the right type of equipment to achieve your goals. Most important is purchasing the right type of footwear, but just as important is the support placed inside the footwear. That's because no matter what type of footwear you buy, shoe manufacturers do little or nothing when it comes to the insole—the part that's in direct contact with the foot; all the technology is placed on the outside of the shoe.

Although there are many different over-the-counter arch supports on the market, most are based on a cushion function. Footwear manufacturers concentrate most of their efforts on the outer “cushioning properties” of the shoe. However, putting more cushion in can be redundant.

Birkenstock, on the other hand, concentrates on the specific support any type of foot needs. The company has been marketing arch supports since the 1930s—and even pioneered the world's first flexible orthotic back in 1907. Today's design features a deep heel cup for stabilization of the foot, a longitudinal arch to support the foot properly and a pronounced metatarsal arch, which allows proper weight distribution.



The correct arch support can improve your health and add comfort to any shoe.

“One out of five patients presenting to a family physician's office have a musculoskeletal complaint,” says Dr. Greg Coppola, Sports Medicine Physician and Associate Professor Michigan State University College of Osteopathic Medicine. “Knee, hip, back and neck pain may be directly related to unsupportive footwear.”

The support in any footwear is from the heel to the ball of the foot. The toe area, for the most part, already has cushioning built into any shoe and does not need additional padding. The Birkenstock arch support is a $\frac{3}{4}$ -length so as to free up the cramped area in most footwear. As feet come in different widths, the company makes its arch supports in narrow, medium and wide widths. To learn more, visit the Web site at www.birkenstock.com.