

Dear fellow members,

My name is Nick Knight and I am Podiatrist currently working as a musculoskeletal specialist for the NHS who will be offering my services to the club. I play hockey at Fareham, and apart from 3 years at university, have always played at the club.

### **What is a podiatrist?**

A Podiatrist is a specialist in the diagnosis and treatment of problems in the lower limb. Podiatry itself has many sub specialities, and as I mentioned earlier I am interested in musculoskeletal podiatry and biomechanics (how the lower limb moves and works) along with gait analysis and footwear.

### **What do I do?**

I assess the muscles, tendons, ligaments and joints within the lower limb to identify the cause of symptoms and diagnose any problems. I assess your gait to see if anything abnormal occurs when you walk and run, and assess the suitability of your footwear as well as identifying any abnormal wear patterns. Treatments can include footwear advice, soft tissue advice (including stretching and strengthening), joint manipulations, strapping/taping and the use of insoles (orthoses) to help alter the mechanics of the lower limb.

The foot is a very complex structure containing 28 bones, 33 joints and over 100 muscles, ligaments and tendons and is something that is used an awful lot everyday with the average person taking 4000-6000 steps a day. Having a poor working foot can lead to pain anywhere in the lower limb from the hip down to the ankle, as well as lower back pain.

Common conditions I see and treat are:-

- Heel pain
- Ankle pain
- Shin pain
- Arch pain
- Forefoot pain
- Leg pain
- Knee pain

### **Selecting appropriate footwear for hockey**

The motions involved in a normal hockey game are multidirectional, dynamic and explosive which can lead to problems especially in the lower legs, ankles and feet. Appropriate footwear both on and off the pitch can play a large part in preventing injuries occurring.

There are 6 things to look out for when selecting sports shoes, but the first 4 things apply to all footwear;

- 1) If you can pick your shoe up and bend it in half easily, it is not supporting your foot at all. You want the shoe to bend where your foot bends, at the toe area.
- 2) Laces or any other type of fastening device is a must, otherwise you will claw your toes to keep them on, look at you flip flops that are worn on holiday or in the summer you will be able to clearly see where all 10 of your toes are, and ladies have a look inside your dolly shoes and you will see the same.
- 3) A small heel of 1.5-2cm is essential.
- 4) If you can hold your shoe at either end and twist it around on its self it is not supporting your feet.
- 5) Lastly, for sport you want a shoe with good heel support. When you squeeze the heel cup you should feel some resistance, if you can squeeze the heel in with minimal effort, it will not effectively help in the prevention of ankle injuries, which are common in hockey players.
- 6) Cushioning - this is not as important as the other 5 points, however a cushioned hockey shoe will always feel more comfortable

### **Running Shoes**

We are all doing fitness outside of hockey and as always it is important to wear the correct footwear. There are generally 3 types of running shoe. Firstly a motion controlled shoe which is generally best suited to people with a flatter foot (excessive pronation). The idea of this shoe is to control how much the foot rolls inwards. The second type of shoe is a neutral shoe which is for people with a normal arch foot. The final type of shoe is a cushioned shoe for the higher arch foot (excessive supination) which cushions the foot as this type of foot is a poor shock absorber. This is not gospel, though is a good starting block.

Price wise you can easily spend over £100 on a pair of running shoes, however there is research showing that the most expensive shoe is not always the best and that a £40- £60 shoe can work just as well, so just be aware.

Running shoes tend to last around 300-400 miles, the way to tell if your running shoes are at the end of their useful running life is to compress the heel, if you can do this relatively easily then they need replacing, also you will find problems as indicated in points 1,4 and 5. When they are worn, they do not have to be binned, they can still be used for day to day activities.

Brands that I recommend are New Balance, Asics, Brooks and Saucony.

I would recommend that you go to get your running shoes fitted, two local shops which offer this service are Alexandra sports (Portsmouth) and Just run (Eastleigh).

## **Contact details**

I will be running clinics at the clubhouse on Tuesday evenings from 19:00 to 21:30; there will be a charge of £10 per appointment. If you have any questions or would like to make an appointment please contact me on 07528247406 or email [fhcpodiatry@gmail.com](mailto:fhcpodiatry@gmail.com).