



### What is the role of a sports Podiatrist?

Sports Podiatry specialises in the diagnosis and management of foot disorders and injuries associated with foot and lower limb function. This focuses on walking and running assessment using video analysis to investigate posture and lower limb function. With a particular interest in the effect of footwear on the load and function of the lower limb.

The role of a sports podiatrist is multifunctional; aiming to prevent injury or to treat an existing injury. Once the role is established a treatment plan can be devised to allow the patient to either continue activity injury free, or to rehabilitate back to full health.



### What are the aims of Podiatric care?

Essentially there are two main aims which a successful Podiatrist will strive to achieve. These aims are governed by one main aim of decreasing the incidence and onset of any lower limb injury.

Aim 1.

To prevent any injury predisposed by specific risk factors identified during Podiatric consultation.

Aim 2.

To treat and rehabilitate any injured patient and keep them injury free.

### How are these aims achieved?

The treatment of any patient presenting with injury or screening needs to be specified to their wants, needs and own goals. Thorough assessment is of critical importance to understand and properly determine the direction to take whilst dealing with the patient.



## The Consultation

### History Taking

- Fully understanding the injury begins with comprehensive personal history of the patients. This also includes information relating directly to the current injury and injuries suffered in the past.
- Without this, the diagnosis and treatment planned can be flawed, as important details may be overlooked. Often the pattern of pain is the biggest key in diagnosis.

### Examination

#### Inspection

- Inspection of the area visually and with palpation is important in determining the types of structures which have been damaged; bruising, swelling and skin damage are clues for the next step of examination, physical integrity testing.

#### Physical examination

- A useful tool to determine which structures have been damaged, and must be coupled with a thorough knowledge of local anatomy. The degree of damage can also be evaluated by testing the muscles, ligaments, joints and tendons involved in the injury process.

#### Dynamic and static gait assessment

- Identifying gait patterns, foot structure and potential causative factors whilst walking and running. Assessing head, shoulder, arm, hip, knee, leg, ankle, heel movement is all done during this part of the assessment. Further assessment of joint quality is of key importance. This allows the Podiatrist to make the informed decision when considering taping, padding and orthoses as possible treatment options.

#### Diagnosis

- This can be arrived at by properly undertaking the previous steps listed. The most common podiatric problems are caused through improper training techniques and lack of physical conditioning. These are kept in mind during the treatment process. Listed below are some of the more common pathologies seen in the podiatric department at OPSMC

- § Plantar Fasciitis.
- § Medial tibial stress syndrome.
- § Achilles and 1<sup>st</sup> Metatarsal Phalangeal pain.
- § Morton's Neuroma.



## Treatment

- Physical therapy
  - o RICER, stretching, strengthening, proprioception training, heating, icing, massage therapy.
- Mechanical therapy
  - o Taping, padding, splinting, orthotic therapy, footwear advice.
- Referrals
  - o Knowing when to refer to other health professionals for further treatment is key to a successful treatment program. Without this knowledge and resources invariably the treatment will fail.
    - § Physiotherapy.
    - § Massage therapists.
    - § Doctors.
    - § Psychologists
    - § Dietitians.
    - § Personal trainers.
  - o Olympic Park Sports Medicine is a multidisciplinary clinic, with all these resources available to every patient seen. This is a huge advantage to the patient as well as each practitioner as consultation can be discussed on site at the time of appointment. Furthermore an intimate knowledge of practitioner's specialities is known, which allows for precise referrals to be given.
  - o Physiotherapy contact for Olympic Park Sports Medicine Centre
    - Andrew Wynd (Bachelor of Physiotherapy)



## Footwear

Essentially if your feet feel good, you will walk well - and continue to walk and exercise. The resulting discomfort of an improper fitting shoe can be the difference between becoming active or remaining sedentary. It is one of the barriers that confront us when we want to start an exercise program. Due to the huge range of footwear brands and styles it is important that the correct shoe is chosen for the foot type being treated. This advice can be given by the Podiatrist and will be correct and up to date.



OPSMC liaise with multiple footwear companies to keep updated with new technologies which are developed every season. Attached is a footwear list used by OPSMC and often given to patients with suggestions of their next purchase.

Important features of good shoes:

- Comfortable, padded heel collar.
- Firm heel counter.
- Stability for the entire foot and leg.
- Heel should be held in the shoe, well cushioned and supported some what higher than the rest of the foot.
- Entire shoe should be designed to absorb shock.
- Sole designed specifically to enhance smooth heel to toe motion.
- Toe box should allow ample room and toes should not be tight against any part of the shoe.

These days we see footwear broken up into three categories, neutral, supportive and controlling. However, with every sports comes different designs of shoes to offer maximum performance; tennis, walking, cricket, cross training, golf, running spikes, football boots and hockey shoes are all included on the shoe list.

## Prevention of Injury

- Often a podiatric service is used within a sporting club to screen the athletes involved. This is done to gain an overall view of the potential for injury, even if the athlete is injury free. It is then the podiatrist's job to offer treatment advice, regarding training programs and footwear. If there is the need for further treatment then this will also be organised.



James Pope

## Podiatrist (Bachelor of Podiatry Honours)

James Pope joined the Olympic Park team in 2008. He has a background in biomechanical research after completing his honours year at La Trobe University in 2007. He studied the effects that foot orthotics have on Achilles Tendon overuse injuries by measuring different kinetic and kinematic parameters during running gait.

James has a particular interest in lower limb biomechanics, and management of injuries in elite and recreational athletes including children and junior competitors.

He has a love for many sports including Australian Rules Football, rugby, soccer, cricket, golf, running and walking.

James also gained experience with the manufacture and prescription of orthotics as a result of working in an orthotic laboratory for two years. He is interested in footwear technology and its development.

### Qualifications

- Bachelor of Podiatry

### Professional Memberships

- Member Australian Podiatry Association

### Personal Sporting Experience

- Plays for St Kevins Old Boys Football and Cricket Club
- Swam competitively for two years
- Currently plays football, indoor cricket, and enjoys running and swimming.