

# Podiatry

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## Introduction: what is podiatry?

**Podiatry** is the area of medicine concerned with the treatment of disorders of the foot; Podiatry is derived from the Greek 'pod' meaning foot. The practice of podiatry is regulated by the Health Professions Council (HPC) which is concerned with ensuring that practitioners maintain acceptable standards of practice. From 2008 the HPC will be monitoring the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) of podiatrists, the professions being the first HPC regulated profession to be audited.

Chiropody (ki-roppadi) also derived from Greek is concerned with the care and treatment of feet. This is perhaps a more familiar professional designation.

The terms Chiropody and Podiatry are nowadays effectively interchangeable.

The British Chiropody and Podiatry Association is the professional body to whom a substantial number of podiatrists and chiropodists belong.

Since 2003 the titles 'Podiatrist' and 'Chiropodist' have been protected by law and can only be used by persons registered with the HPC.

The field of podiatry and chiropody covers a wide range of treatments.

At Emscote Therapy - Podiatry, in the narrower meaning of the word encompasses;

**Podiatric Biomechanics** is an integral aspect of evaluating and treating lower limb pathologies. It includes gait analysis. At Emscote we have invested in F Scan which is a computer assisted system for measuring forces and pressures beneath the foot.

**Orthotic Therapy** is the part of the process which results in the provision of a device to manage the conditions which will have been diagnosed in the biomechanical evaluation. An orthotic is an orthopaedic appliance used to support, align, prevent or correct deformities or to improve function of moveable parts of the body.

**Paediatric Biomechanics** The treatment of children's gait and foot problems.

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## Children and Podiatry

### Will Orthotics be of use to children?

Many children benefit from foot Orthotic therapy and at The Emscote Therapy Centre we delight in helping many children enjoy sports without painful symptoms.

It is quite usual for appointments to be made for toddlers at Emscote if a parent has concerns regarding their Child's feet. A lot of foot conditions are genetic in origin so if you have problems so may your children, Podiatry (Orthotic Therapy) may help as they grow. Please bring toddlers and babies in shorts or clothing that is easily removed without much disruption to the child. The session will take place in a clinic environment. This will not be a frightening experience for your child. Please bring footwear if applicable that is currently in use. Thirty minutes is usually allowed for this appointment. Peter Robinson - Podiatrist will be happy to discuss this.

### Will the Orthotics still work as feet grow?

Prescription Orthotic Devices will last for one and a half shoe sizes.

## What is Podiatric Biomechanics?

**Podiatric Biomechanics** is the 'foot function' approach used in the treatment of lower limb musculoskeletal dysfunction. Biomechanics is concerned with understanding the movement and forces applied to the foot and lower extremities of the human body. Biomechanics practitioners are concerned with trying to modify those forces to spread some load and reduce some forces and pressures that may be applied to the foot at any given moment in order to improve a person's gait.

It is of great interest that each foot and each foot step is unique. (Like snowflakes which look identical but when examined each one is unique and different.) Whilst the basic principles of motion are common to each human being the fashioning of the body will produce variations in that motion. These variations can be the result of abnormal compensations from musculo-skeletal imbalance. These can be inherited i.e. genetic or acquired i.e. traumatic injury or surgical intervention.