

A Step in the Right Direction: Orthotics in the Military



Capstone Project

ORTHOTICS FOR THE MILITARY RECRUIT

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What a recruit should know about orthotics

How common are injuries in BMT?

The physical nature of basic military training (BMT) may put you at risk for injury. This occurs in 14 to 42% of men and 27 to 61% of women. As a recruit you will perform long marches and runs. These may create leg or foot pain. Injuries can cause you to miss days. Or worse have to drop out of training. What can you do?

How orthotics may help you!

An orthotic is an insert that can be used for your shoe or boot. These inserts can prevent foot and leg pain. They can be made to fit your foot shape. Do you have flat feet or high arches? Orthotics may support your foot in the proper position. Leading to less chance of injury.

Where do you get orthotics?

You can get them at the store or from a clinic. Store inserts are good for minor foot pain and issues. They can also support healthy feet. An orthotist, podiatrist, or physical therapist can make custom inserts. These are better for people with foot or leg pain during exercise. Custom inserts may take several weeks to make. You will want to leave enough time before training to account for this.

What if you get hurt?

Didn't use orthotics? Well, they can treat injuries too. Many problems (see list) can be helped with the use of inserts. Inserts could reduce your pain and improve mobility. This may allow you to continue training.

Most Common Injuries during BMT

- LOW BACK PAIN
- TENDINITIS
- SPRAIN
- MUSCLE STRAIN
- STRESS FRACTURE
- OVERUSE KNEE INJURY

Injuries Commonly Treated with Orthoses

- PATELLOFEMORAL PAIN SYNDROME
- ILIOTIBIAL BAND SYNDROME
- MEDIAL TIBIAL STRESS SYNDROME
- PLANTAR FASCIITIS
- TENDINOPATHIES
- PAINFUL PES CAVUS
- POSTERIOR TIBIAL TENDON DYSFUNCTION

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Orthoses are not issued at BMT so buy or see a trained specialist before reporting
- Increase wear time gradually to avoid discomfort (on the first day wear for an hour, increasing time each day)
- Orthoses may be uncomfortable at first but give your body a few weeks to adjust
- Orthoses are good for both boots and running shoes for preventing injuries (wear at all times)
- After a leg or foot injury ask your health care professional if orthoses may help

