

## Soldier On:

Many of our troops have made sacrifices. They have left everything they know, their friends and families, to travel thousands of miles away and fight for our country. When returning home they are faced with a multitude of challenges in returning to their civilian lives but none as unique as those returning as amputees.



These highly active and physically fit soldiers now find themselves confined by limitations. The average challenges of returning from war have been compacted by a serious life altering injury. However, the VA in conjunction with local prosthetic facilities are committed to aid in the transition. Many soldiers are concerned that their limb loss will impact their ability to accomplish routine goals like walking the dog.

As many prosthetic patients find, these simple goals are the first and easiest to accomplish. But many soldiers would like to be able to run, jump and return to combat. For some this has become possible through the use of micro-processor knee units, advancements in feet systems and spring like athletic styled legs. These advancements coupled with a stringent Physical Therapy routine have allowed many soldiers to return to a high level of activity and even return to service.

The dedication and commitment demonstrated by military personnel with

amputations is an example to the entire community. They are showing the average amputee not only what is possible but how to attain it. Many of these soldiers are sporting top of the line and newly designed prosthetics for high performance. Yet it is not the leg but the soldier that makes the difference. These soldiers are an incredible example of what an amputee can accomplish, from playing basketball to running a marathon to serving their country.

O & P Design is a contracted VA vendor and proud to serve our troops in any way that we can. It is our aim to service each of our patients with the best quality of life we can offer. We encourage all of our patients to discuss with your practitioner what your passions and goals are so that they are best able to serve you.

## How You Can Aid Our Troops:

Perhaps you are not able to provide prosthetic care to returning Military amputees but there are other ways to assist these heroes. There are several volunteer organizations that support our troops through service work and donations. If you would like to help you may want to visit [www.supportourtroops.org](http://www.supportourtroops.org) to find opportunities. There are many other ways to help including contacting your local VA offices.

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## How Do I Look?

**T**oning shoes have certainly become the new athletic craze. Women and even some men are buying them up by the truck load. There are commercials from every major shoe manufacturer reporting miraculous results. How easy can it be; wear these shoes and you'll have a toned beautiful backside, the commercials say. But is it really that easy? Are they safe? What is the risk of injury?

Yes, much of the toning capabilities the shoe manufacturers promise will be delivered. Based on the design of the shoe, which is either a rounded sole or a partial ball at the fore and rear foot, these shoes will provide toning. These modifications challenge gait enough that

the wearer experiences a challenge to their stability and thus their muscle groups. Prolonged wearing of these shoes will result in increased balance, toning of the gluteus maximus and the calves.

Yet are they safe to wear? What is the down side? At

this point researchers have found no cause for healthy individuals not to wear the shoes. In a controlled walking setting they pose no threat of injury. However in a running setting there have been incidence of sprains and pains. The shoes are designed to challenge balance and are in no way considered an appropriate running shoe. Also while wearing these shoes the wearer should be careful to use them on an even surface. The shoes are designed to create instability so that your body has to work harder with every step, any further instability could result in injury. If you are an individual already experiencing balance issues or are experiencing instability these shoes are not a safe option. Due to their design individuals who have these type of issues may injure themselves while wearing a toning shoe. Sorry to say toning shoes would not be appropriate footwear choice for anyone wearing a lower limb brace.

So the question is which one should you buy. Should you get the Sketcher shape up or Reebok's easy tone? A little research online will result in a whirl wind of consumer reports and reviews. You may want to start here to narrow your search, eliminating shoes that are reportedly uncomfortable or don't hold up well. The next step would be to try them out. It's important to make sure that you can handle the amount of gait alteration the shoe is providing.

Good luck shaping up!

## Dr. Comfort Shoes Available Now!

**D**iabetic shoes have not always been considered attractive footwear but Dr. Comfort is changing diabetic shoes for the better. Combining comfort, protection and fashion these shoes provide a stylish alternative to your classic diabetic footwear. O & P Design proudly provides a variety of Dr. Comfort shoes. For more information speak to your practitioner about which Dr. Comfort styles are available to suit your needs.



## My Feet Are Killing Me:

**T**housands suffer from foot pain, these pains vary from slight running pain to daily discomfort. There are thousands of solutions from store brand shoe inserts to custom foot orthotics. A custom foot orthotic is made by hand from a plaster mold of your foot. The custom option offers a variety of materials which can be adjusted subtly to your comfort needs by a trained professional. It is difficult for some patients to determine what solution best fits their needs. When debating between a simple pharmacy insert and a custom orthotic it is important to consider your condition.



Is your pain chronic? If you experience routine pain associated with your regular activities you may want to consider a custom option.

Do you require protection as well as comfort? If you suffer from diabetes or neuropathy you may need not only a comfort solution but a protective solution as well. Custom foot orthotics maintain good foot health and ward against blistering as well as other potential complications.

Will you require continued care? If you have particular pain in a sensitive area you may want to consider a custom option. Each pair of custom orthotics come with a full year of service. Your pain may shift or may need more direct care; these adjustments can be made to your custom foot orthotics as problems arise.

Most importantly it is a good idea to consult a professional when making a decision in your treatment plan. You may want to make an appointment with one of our certified practitioners. These professionals can assist you in answering some of your questions as well as make a recommendation for what style of insert would best service your needs.

## Do I Need An Adjustment?

**I**t is vital for our patients to be vigilant about their brace care. Slight changes in your gait, weight changes or condition change can drastically alter the fit of your device. Maintaining proper fit and guarding yourself against potential complications is as easy as 1, 2, 3.

1. Check your skin: Every time your device is removed you should look for skin breakdown. Red marks on the skin that persist for more than a few moments should be monitored and reported to your practitioner. If you experience heat sensitivity or any unusual sensation or pain that should also be reported to your practitioner.

2. Check your brace: A brace is a finite piece of equipment and is susceptible to break down. Check your brace regularly for cracks, loose pieces and frayed fabric components. Double check all screws, bolts and rivets making sure they are still tight. If you notice any possible complications with your device contact your practitioner immediately.

3. Regular check-ups: We suggest a yearly check-up of your device. In the course of a year your condition may change or alter. The brace itself may experience complications and be in need of adjustments. At the very least a yearly check-up is recommended. If you experience problems sooner make an appointment as soon as possible.

It is always best to be safe then sorry. If you suspect any problems or have any concerns contact our office as soon as possible and schedule an appointment. Our central office is open Monday through Friday from 8 am to 4:30 pm.

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Safe  
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