

# Foot Health The Barefoot Movement and Grounding



Our feet are more important than we know and we need to take care of them more than we realize.

Why?

The kinetic chain starts with the feet. The kinetic chain is the notion that all joints and segments have an effect on one another during movement. Therefore when there is an imbalance usually caused by poor movement patterns it can affect multiple areas in the body. And it all starts with the feet.

The lower the functional performance of the feet, the lower the functional performance of the "gait" or "the way in which we walk" causing poor movement patterns. Our feet and our gait have a very important role in preventing imbalances in the entire body due to the kinetic chain and the notion that all our body systems are connected.

Our entire body is also connected via fascia which is a thin casing of connective tissue that surrounds and holds every organ, blood vessel, bone, nerve fiber and muscle in place. So when we are not moving properly or there is an imbalance somewhere it can affect a variety of different mechanisms in the body including our organs!

This is why the study of biomechanics is important. Biomechanics is the study of the structure, function and motion of the mechanical aspects of biological systems, at any level from whole organisms to organs, cells and cell organelles, using the methods of mechanics. And it ALL starts at the feet.

If everything in our bodies are connected somehow then everything is going to affect each other in some way or another just like a domino effect, going as far as our mood and emotions.

Biomechanics -----> Organs -----> Emotions -----> Mental Health

## The Barefoot Movement

The Barefoot Movement is not all about walking around barefoot or not wearing shoes but more about RETRAINING your body to move in the right way for:

- Pain control
- Injury prevention
- Healthy organs
- Stable emotions
- Mental health

The foot's architectural design and its biomechanical function was responsible for our distinctive erect manner of gait as a human being, walking on two feet with a stride.

Modern shoes are packed full of features that although being marketed as being "good" for our feet, are actually changing the way we move and creating un-natural gait patterns that may be placing you at much higher risk of pain and injury. We can retrain our feet by reevaluating our shoes but also in strengthening our feet, learning to move properly with good body mechanics and good posture for optimal health.

## Grounding and Earthing

Grounding is the concept of absorbing electromagnetic frequencies from the earth.

How it works:

The earth's surface has a negative electric charge, and when it comes in contact with human tissue, there is an equalization. The body can take on extra electrons and build up a static electric charge affecting the **living matrix**, which is the central connector between living cells.

Electrical conductivity exists within the matrix that functions as an immune system defense, similar to antioxidants. They believe that through grounding, the natural defenses of the body can be restored.

There isn't a whole lot of research on this topic yet, but some reported benefits include decreased inflammation, prevention of cardiovascular disease, prevention of muscle damage, improved chronic pain, and improved mood.

All that being said when you put shoes on you, you are not only causing an un-natural gait pattern but also not absorbing that energy from the earth.

## So what can you do to strengthen your feet?

### Foot Strengthening Exercises:

- pointing and flexing your toes
- grasp big toe, pull and circulate it around in circles going in both directions
- in a kneeling lunge position sway body back and fourth
- in a kneeling lunge position twist body side to side
- calf raises
- calf raises holding ball in between feet
- glute bridges with weight on your heels
- balancing on one leg
- balance on one leg while "scrunching" your foot/big toe in and back
- rolling bottom of your foot on lacrosse or tennis ball
- reflexology mats

### Foot Strengthening Activities:

- walk around in your bare feet on the "earth" to get that magnetic charge
- go on a "earthing" walk (bare foot) making sure to choose your terrain wisely avoiding paths with sharp twigs or rocks (the beach is a great place for this).
- single leg balancing or yoga poses