

LOSE THE SHOES

by Robins Key

Being barefoot is a natural way of being for us. Most of us learned how to walk barefoot and spent lots of time as a child barefoot. More importantly, training and walking barefoot is something simple that we can do to improve the health of our feet as well as our whole body. Being barefoot is our natural state of being. Many wander savannas and rain forests without the protection or support of shoes and have strong healthy feet. The fact is that people who have never worn shoes have very few foot problems at all.

Going barefoot strengthens the stabilizing muscles of the foot and ankle and makes them stronger. Shoes give a lot of stability and support and can make the foot and ankle lazy. Strengthening the small stabilizing muscles of the feet can improve our balance and overall sports performance.

Going barefoot improves our proprioception which will improve our balance and movement. Proprioception is our unconscious perception of space and our orientation and movement within the space around us. Going barefoot helps us to feel and connect us to our environment and this helps our balance and develops our natural movements.

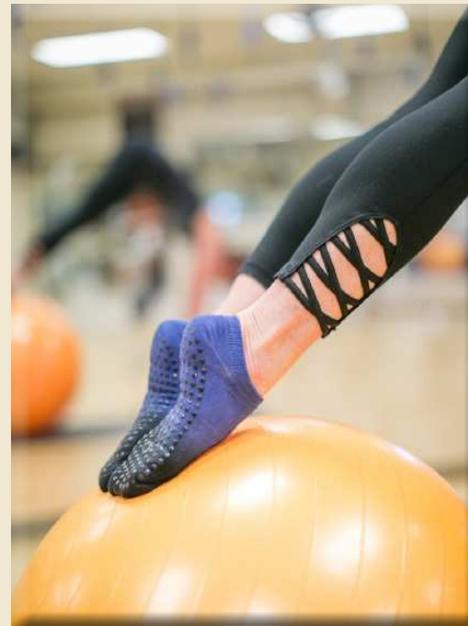
Go barefoot for stronger ankles and more support. Almost 30% of the joints in our body are in our feet. Our feet are the base of support for our whole body. Often knee and back pain stem from improper foot mechanics. Artificial support from shoes can place unnatural pressure on the knees, spine and neck. Our foot mechanics affects our whole posture.

Going barefoot improves muscle alignment.

Different muscle segments are used when we are barefoot than when we are in shoes and different muscle patterns become habitually recruited and strengthened. In addition, going barefoot improves and strengthens the neuromuscular pathways of the foot and leg. These mold the muscle firing sequences and affect the way we move. It also increases flexibility and mobility of the foot and gives a much wider range of motion.

Going barefoot gives you stronger arches. Wearing shoes will artificially raise your arches and directly remove the responsibility from the arch muscles to do their job.

Wearing shoes can create a vicious circle with arch support. First our arch muscles become weak from not being used, as they are supported by shoes.



So, you get weak arches and you need more support to relieve the tension temporarily. But now if you go for a flatter or less supported shoe the symptoms will return. So, you end up needing more and more support but the root of the problem does not get addressed. This leads to a life of shoes and orthopedic problems. Let your natural arch muscles develop naturally to avoid these problems.