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ROUND TABLE:

A Look at Some Special Shoes

Our experts discuss some unique footwear used for specialized foot conditions.

By Marc Haspel, DPM

Concerned podiatrists regularly incorporate shoe therapy in their treatment plans. Often simple shoe recommendations and/or adjustments are all that are needed to get a successful outcome. There are times, however, when podiatrists must turn to special shoe types in order to fulfill their patients' needs. Certain biomechanical, medical and anatomic situations demand special considerations. For instance, patients beset with allergies may require hypoallergenic shoes to function properly.

Podiatry Management has invited several shoe specialists within the profession to discuss special shoe gear designed to meet the challenges of certain conditions.

Joining the panel are:

Paul Kesselman, DPM is a regular contributor to *Podiatry Management Magazine* and an expert panelist on coding issues for Codingline.com. He provides consulting services to numerous DME device and wound care product manufacturers and to many podiatric practices. His practices in Brooklyn and Queens, NY concentrate primarily on wound care as well as podiatric sports medicine.

Loretta Logan, DPM, is an associate professor at the New York College of Podiatric Medicine and Foot Clinics of New York. She was recently appointed as assistant chairman in the Department of Orthopedics. She also chairs the Physical Rehabilitation subdivision of the Orthopedics department. She is a diplomate of The American Board of Podiatric Orthopedics and Primary Podiatric Medicine and has



been in private practice in New York for fifteen years.

Robert Schwartz, C.Ped is president and CEO of Eneslow Pedorthic Enterprises, Inc. which operates Eneslow, The Foot Comfort Center, Eneslow Pedorthic Institute (EPI), and www.eneslow.com. Mr. Schwartz is a past president of the Pedorthic Footwear Association. Mr. Schwartz is currently an adjunct instructor in the department of orthopedic sciences at the New York College of Podiatric Medicine. He participates on the faculty of Apex Univer-

sity, and on the advisory board of foot.com and *Pedorthic Newswire*.

Robert Shor, DPM, C. Ped has been a board certified pedorthist since 1993. He is the Medical Director of SureFit, a lab that specializes in the manufacture of therapeutic shoes and inserts for the diabetic patient. Dr. Shor's fitting system for therapeutic footwear has been in widespread use in the podiatric profession since 1999.

Josh White, DPM is the founder and president of SafeStep. He is board certified in podiatric orthopedics and is a certified pedorthist with over 15 years experience providing diabetic preventative foot care. Dr. White has pioneered the development of affordable customized footwear to a wide range of patients with special needs or disabilities, from high performance athletes to functionally compromised or disabled patients. He is a corporate partner and advisor to the American Academy of Podiatric Practice Management.

The following is an excerpt . . .

Special Shoes...



PM: What are Z-Coil® shoes? Why are they used?

Logan: Z-Coil shoes use a spring as the primary factor in reducing skeletal pain and absorbing shock. The technology for the shoe was inspired by Al Gallegos in the mid-1980's. Al was a runner who suffered from common running injuries: plantar fasciitis, knee problems, and back pain. He realized that his injuries were caused by the impact of hitting the ground while running. He decided that putting a "shock absorber" in the heel of his shoe could reduce the impact on his skeletal system and reduce his pain. A coil would provide energy return and help his running. Al set out on his mission to design and eventually patent his Z-Coil technology. In 1997, a functional design for a running shoe was developed. There have been several modifications and improvements to the design since then.

Z-Coil footwear claims to alleviate arthritis, joint pain, back pain, sciatica, and foot pain secondary to heel spurs, plantar fasciitis, and forefoot pathology. The Z-Coil spring is adjustable to accommodate for over-pronation and supination. The Z-Orthotic built into the shoe cradles the curves of each foot which evenly distributes pressure and offers better stability. Extra forefoot cushioning reduces forefoot pain. Z-Coil footwear also assists the natural flexing point of the foot with a permanent flex line.

Due to the coil in the heel, caution should be taken when wearing Z-Coil footwear in areas where there are protruding cords, cables or other objects that could get caught in the coil. In addition, rocks and debris can get caught in the coil, but shouldn't be difficult to remove. The coils are not expected to wear out or break, but the rubber heel pad underneath the coil may wear and need to be replaced.

Josh White: According to the company, the shoe provides four times more cushioning than any regular shoe. The company also states that the rigid "Z-Orthotic" prevents the plantar ligament from stretching, which causes mid-foot pain or plantar fasciitis. It also prevents the plantar ligament from detaching from the heel bone, the sole cause of heel spurs and the cause of most heel pain.

People would generally wear the Z-Coil shoe if nothing else can afford pain relief, or if they want to attract attention to themselves. The design is unique and certain to draw comment. If it works to relieve intractable pain, many will consider the attention, even if not desired, worth it.

Shor: This shoe can be used for patients with intractable heel pain or other impact-related problems. For patients who have exhausted traditional treatment protocols, it might be worth a try. I would caution anyone using this shoe to make sure that no other symptoms develop during use.