



Insoles do not prevent back pain

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| Clinical Question | Are shoe insoles effective in the prevention and treatment of non-specific back pain? |
| Bottom Line | Compared to placebo, no intervention or other interventions (eg sham insoles), customised and non-customised shoe insoles are not effective for the prevention of back pain. There is limited evidence that insoles might decrease back pain. There is also limited evidence that insoles can adversely shift pain from the back to the lower extremities. |
| Caveat | Half of the trials were low quality studies with heterogeneous interventions and outcome measures, poor blinding and poor reporting. No long-term treatment and prevention data are available. The longest trial lasted 14 weeks. |
| Context | Back pain is one of the commonest health problems in the industrialised world, with estimates that between 60-85% of the population will experience back pain at some point in their lives. Laboratory trials suggest that the use of shoe insoles might be beneficial in prevention and treatment of back pain, by absorbing the shock of the foot striking the ground and supporting the foot in proper alignment. |
| Cochrane Systematic Review | Sahar T et al. Insoles for prevention and treatment of back pain. Cochrane Reviews 2007, Issue 4. Art No : CD005275 .DOI : 10.1002/14651858. CD005275.pub 2. The review contains 6 trials involving 2,317 participants. |
| PEARLS No. 32, February 2008, written by Brian R McAvoy | |