

## The break-in guide

1. If they are not comfortable, do not 'push on regardless'. Do not "persist" blindly. Consider what is happening. Is one foot worse than the other? Is it only the one pair of shoes? You may need to slow down even more, or stop altogether for a while. Give us a call if you're not sure.
2. In the first week, please leave at least 3 hours between the morning and the afternoon sessions.
3. These times are based on normal walking: Around the house, to the bus, down to the shops. Not sitting, and not exercising.
4. Once you can *walk* on them all day, *then* you can start light exercise, *then* heavy exercise & sports, *then* even run a marathon. Step Flex orthotics are worn during all kinds of sports.
5. During the break-in period you will feel some changes, maybe even discomfort, nausea or pain, in different parts of the body as it realigns. If this occurs, just back off and don't increase the wearing time until it passes. Contact us if concerned.
6. For the break-in, a comfortable pair of shoes with laces is best. We strongly suggest that you do *not* buy or alter any shoes until you complete the break-in, as your feet are changing shape. Best to let that happen *before* selecting new shoes. If you don't have any suitable shoes for the break-in check our website or call us for a very cheap solution.
7. If you are already wearing other orthotics, then we recommend you continue to use them while not in ours. Phase the old orthotics out and phase Step Flex in. You will *not* adjust to Step Flex orthotics faster just because you have been wearing other orthotics. In fact, the break-in may even be slower!
8. The correct size may feel too long or short at first, or different between each foot. Give the feet time to adjust to the orthotics.

## The break-in chart

When you first stand on the orthotic it may feel like you are standing on a golf ball. You must **not** wear your orthotics all day the first day, or the muscles will strain and bruise. Your feet & body need time to adjust to the arch supports gradually during a break-in period of several weeks. This is **very** important. It may take 2 weeks, 1 month or even 3 months for them to feel comfortable. You may not be able to progress at all for a few days. If you are having problems, stop wearing them and contact us for advice. Do not blindly "persist". Ask for help. Very few people have problems, but we can usually help if contacted.

	Day:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7*	10*	14*	17*	21*	28*	35*	42*
Slow path	AM	0:05	0:10	0:15	0:20	0:30	0:45	1:00	1:30	2:00	2:30	3:00	3:30	4:00	All Day
	PM	0:05	0:10	0:15	0:20	0:30	0:45	1:00	1:30	2:00	2:30	3:00	3:30	4:00	All Day
Medium path	AM	0:15	0:30	0:45	1:00	1:15	1:30	1:45	2:30	3:30	4:30	All Day			
	PM	0:15	0:30	0:45	1:00	1:15	1:30	1:45	2:30	3:30	4:30	All Day			
Fast path	AM	0:30	1:00	1:30	2:00	2:30	3:00	3:30	4:00	All Day					
	PM	0:30	1:00	1:30	2:00	2:30	3:00	3:30	4:00	All Day					

**Slow path:**

For old feet, high arches or a history of heel pain. Allow 6 weeks to 3 months to be wearing them all day.

**Medium path:**

The Medium path suits most people. Expect about 3 weeks to be wearing them all day.

**Fast path:**

For feet that are very young and very flat. Within 1 to 2 weeks you could be wearing them all day.

\* *Interpolate. For days 8 and 9 you will be somewhere between the day 7 time and the day 10 time. Use your discretion.*



# STEP FLEX



### Instructions for Use

Place the orthotics in your shoes with the narrow end pushed to the back of the shoe. Use the left orthotic (marked L) in the left shoe and the right orthotic (marked R) in the right shoe. Use the break-in chart provided to increase your wearing each day, as advised by your fitter.

### Made in Germany

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## Caring for your orthotics

1. Step Flex orthotics will not cause the feet to sweat or become irritated and they will not retain any odour. The orthotics can be washed in warm water, using liquid soap or hand dishwashing detergent. Wipe or air dry them. Do **not** dry them with heat (see below). Progressive discolouration of the orthotics is normal and cannot be avoided.
2. The orthotics will be damaged by excessive heat. Do not expose them to temperatures above 50°C. Do not boil or microwave them. Do not expose them to a radiator, oven or hairdryer.
3. Abrasion or 'wear & tear' is not covered by the warranty. This will happen faster with no shoe lining, with sand and dirt inside the shoes and for heavier people. Dogs love to chew on them, and this is *not* covered by any warranty! Our website shows examples of typical wear & tear, damage and faults.
4. Step Flex orthotics will normally maintain their full arch over many years, but some may seem to flatten over time. Visit our website for a video that shows you how to restore the arch.



## Footwear

1. Shoes loose and slipping off at the heel? This will not be a problem with well-fitted *new* shoes. Overcome the problem by tying your laces firmer, by attaching heel grips to your shoes or filling the shoes by adding an extra pair or two of flat insoles *under* the orthotics.
2. Shoes too tight? The orthotics are paper thin under the heel. Step Flex are pushing against your *arch*, not your *heel*. During the break-in the muscle will relax and allow

the foot to drop back down to the correct height. Make more space by replacing the thick insoles that came with the shoe with something thinner.

3. Shoes must *always* have insoles *under* the orthotics to minimise abrasion. If you remove the original insole for any reason, you *must* replace it with other flat insoles. These are widely available & inexpensive. If you wear the orthotics in shoes with *no* insoles, they
  - a) won't work as well,
  - b) won't feel as comfortable and
  - c) will wear out or be damaged by abrasion prematurely.
4. If your shoes have significant inbuilt arch support, which may tilt our orthotics or prevent them flexing, replace the original insole with a flat insole or cut away the lump from the shoe's insole.



5. When buying new shoes always try them *with* the orthotics. Do not buy new shoes until your feet have adapted to the orthotics.
6. Your Step Flex orthotics can be worn in a wide variety of shoes. There are some shoes that are not suitable for use with Step Flex. Very tight dress shoes may not fit. Court shoes may be too loose at the heel. Backless shoes will always be a problem.
7. The orthotics will slide out from backless shoes as you walk along. Although the Velcro method (detailed on our website) can help for a few days, we recommend you avoid backless shoes. There are plenty of sandals that include a back, such as those shown here and many more shown on our website.
8. If you are determined to wear high heels you'll be better off *with* our orthotics than without, but the higher the heel the less support you'll get.



## Guarantees and warranties

Our goods come with guarantees that cannot be excluded under the New Zealand Consumer Guarantees Act. You are entitled to a replacement or refund for a major failure and compensation for any other reasonably foreseeable loss or damage. You are also entitled to have the goods repaired or replaced if the goods fail to be of acceptable quality and the failure does not amount to a major failure.

Step Flex orthotics are warranted by Step Flex GmbH against breaking, cracking or splitting for 5 years from the date of purchase. This does not apply where the orthotics have worn thin, been damaged or been modified. To claim, contact Brookings Agencies Ltd. If our assessment confirms such a product failure we'll replace your orthotics. The 5 years continues from the date of *original* purchase (it does not reset).

We warrant that you will like your Step Flex orthotics. In the rare situation where this is not true you can return them for a partial refund. Contact us as soon as you have a problem and seek our assistance. In most cases we can help you solve the issue and move on with the break-in. Returned orthotics must be in original condition (apart from fair wear and tear) and unmodified. The refund will be the amount you paid for the orthotics (excluding postage charges) less \$95 per pair. No refund will be considered after 2 calendar months from the purchase date, unless we have extended this in writing.

In all cases, postage costs are the responsibility of the sender. You pay for your postage and we pay for our postage.

## Medical Advice

Symptoms can be due to a wide range of causes. Only a qualified medical practitioner can diagnose your condition. This document explains how Step Flex orthotics can be helpful in many situations, but must not be taken as medical advice. If pain persists see your medical professional.

## More information

We recommend you visit our website for more information. Find out about many different conditions and how Step Flex may be beneficial. Learn some useful exercises to help with your bunions or plantar fasciitis. Having problems using Step Flex with some of your shoes? Can you wear them in heels? We have many useful suggestions. How do you wash them? Are they recyclable? There's a whole section specially for people like you who now own a pair of Step Flex orthotics.

[www.stepflex.co.nz](http://www.stepflex.co.nz)