

NO MORE FLAT FEET, NO MORE PAIN!

Hoag Hospital surgeon performs procedure to correct flat feet, a problem as common as eye trouble – ‘It’s totally genetic,’ he says.

Whenever Nick Bowden played basketball or took his morning runs, intense pain attacked his knees, back and hips. And Bowden’s 20 years old, not some middle-aged guy trying to round back into shape. In fact, the former Newport Beach resident, who is now a student in Santa Barbara suffered through years of pain, sometimes having to turn to friends to help him hobble around the house after a game.

He also had flat feet, and that was the problem. But after two 15-minute surgeries to correct the flat feet, Bowden is able to run, play basketball and do other activities mostly pain free. The surgery is done one foot at a time and requires about three to four weeks of recovery.

“My body immediately responded to the surgery, especially once I had both [feet] done,” Bowden said, sitting in an exam chair at

podiatrist Ivar E. Roth’s Newport Beach office. “A week after, I stood up and I could feel my back was completely straight. People used to tell me I had a posture problem—some of my friends called me sloth—and the first time I really stood up, my back was straight and now it’s just effortless. It’s perfection.”

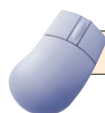
Like Bowden, many people do not realize that chronic back, knee and hip pain can be connected to flat feet, Hoag Memorial Hospital Presbyterian’s Roth said. “Having flat feet is as common as people having eye problems—it’s totally genetic,” Roth said.

Roth suggested the surgery to Bowden. Roth had helped him before with toe problems, including surgery to correct an ingrown toenail. Roth noticed, after his summer training course with the doctor who developed the flat-feet surgery, that Bowden would be a perfect candidate.

Roth is the only podiatrist at Hoag who is qualified to do the corrective surgeries.



Dr. Ivar E. Roth, a podiatrist and surgeon, examines Nick Bowden's feet. Roth surgically inserted stents in Bowden's feet to correct pain-causing flatness.





Roth examines Bowden's X-rays and the implanted stents

During surgery a titanium stent, or spacer, is placed between bones in the foot, correcting their positions improving the arch. The stent keeps the space between the bones open—just like a stent placed in a blood vessel or artery would help keep it open and the blood flowing—so the bones act as they should, stopping pain, Roth said.

Because people with flat feet have no arch support, the feet and legs tend to turn in, which throws the rest of the body out of alignment, Roth said. Chronic neck, lower back and hip pain can result from the added stress.

The corrective outpatient surgery is covered by some insurance companies and requires only local anesthesia. The patient is able to carefully resume day-to-day activities within a week. Athletes, like Bowden, should take it easy a bit longer.

"I feel like I could just gun it now and go as hard as I wanted. I have no signs of pain, but I choose not to," Bowden said. "My balance is totally different...everything is slightly tweaked."

For Bowden, the tweaks are all positive, but if it's not, the surgery is reversible. If for some reason the surgery doesn't take or the flat feet weren't the cause of the person's pain, the stent can be removed as easily as it was inserted.

Knee replacements and the like are generally guaranteed by orthopedic surgeons for about 10 years, Roth said. The stents he's placed in about eight of his patients have a lifetime guarantee.

Roth said Bowden's recovery has been excellent, right in line with what is expected of patients.

"He's doing great," Roth said.

For more information about the surgery or Dr. Roth's practice, call (949) 650-1147.

Amanda Pennington is on staff at the Daily Pilot.

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