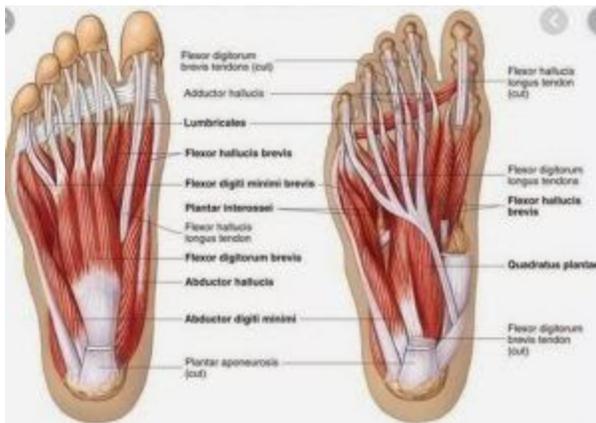


It may be overstating the obvious to say that we need our feet to function well in order to feel good and be able to perform at the top of our game.

There are unfortunately so many athletes out there who have lost their ability to play because their feet just don't function as they should.

Enter **Short Foot** exercise, also sometimes referred to as "Small Foot."



When the muscles contained only inside of your feet (known as intrinsic muscles) weaken over time and lose their ability to function as they're designed to, the stress and strain that can result end up taking a toll on not only our feet, but all of the other connective tissue, joints, and bones, that are nearby. *The calf muscles or the plantar fascia are two examples.*

Want one quick and easy answer as to why so many runners get calf injuries, stress fractures in the foot, or suffer from plantar fasciitis? **That reason is ....weakened intrinsic foot muscles.**

It comes back to the simple idea that compensation ...where one part of the body has to take over for the job of another part because that other part isn't doing its job, ends up over stressing a nearby area of the body, be it a joint, bones, or muscle.

If that pattern of **compensation** continues and load is added, injury usually ensues.

Think of it this way: our body is a lot like a union shop – every part has a job to do. When every part (or in the case of the union shop, every body) is doing their job and handling their area of responsibility, everyone and everything's happy and things get done.

This simple concept – that *in order to feel good and function well and perform, every body part needs to handle its responsibility and not be asked to do some other task it wasn't designed for* – is the central focus of so much of this training. It's simple! But oh so profound.

**One last tip:** spend as much time as you can during the day, OUT of your shoes. Foot strength deteriorates because we wear shoes from the time we're little babes. Shoes provide artificial support that allows for weakening. We all need stronger healthier feet! Being barefoot more often can lead us in the right direction.

Of course, if you're accustomed to wearing shoes all of the time, be patient and wean yourself off of them gradually. Going from zero time spent barefooted to multiple hours, overnight, is likely to irritate your feet and legs. Be patient and persistent.

Now, before you leave here for the moment, **don't miss out on the chance to watch this video right below**, for a quick tip on the value of toe and heel walking for improved foot and leg strength! Rock on!