

A Mission to Support: Oofos Makes a Difference When and Where it Matters the Most

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Through the years I have come across a handful of products that have truly impacted the way I treat various ailments of the foot and ankle. I am always on the hunt to find new technology that can help me bring the best care available to my patients, whether it is a new surgical plating system, an updated ankle



Picture of me overlooking a valley just outside of Chulucanas, Peru, a small remote town in a valley of the Morropón Province, Piura

replacement design, a breakthrough in biologics, or durable medical equipment. Sometimes the simplest of solutions can make a huge impact on a patient's journey to recovery. Continuity of care is perhaps one of the biggest problems we face, especially when it comes to the patient's choice of shoe gear outside of an athletic shoe environment with proper support. In fact, most of my patients that are struggling with foot pain admit that once they get home, they remove their shoes and go barefoot. During the initial days of Covid when people were spending more time at home (and barefoot), I saw a significant increase in foot ailments such as plantar fasciitis, neuroma pain, and metatarsalgia. I would encourage patients to avoid going barefoot and to wear supportive shoes around the house. It seemed most people didn't know how to

find sandals or slippers that provided both comfort and support, or they were hard to find in the stores... Enter Oofos.

About 5 years ago, I discovered Oofos for my own feet. I was at a running shoe store when I came across a new sandal company that I had never heard of. The sales reps said that they were the most comfortable sandals he has ever worn. They were being promoted as a "recovery" sandal for athletes. I ended up buying a pair and started wearing them around the house when I got home. I immediately fell in love... well, at least my feet did. When I moved to Florida about 9 years ago and all of the floors in the house were hard and painful to walk on. I have also had issues with neuroma pain on and off through the years and have had two back surgeries. Oofos solved that problem for me. My feet look forward to getting home and slipping into my Oofos sandals after a long day of being in the clinic or standing for countless hours in the operating room.

I reached out to Oofos to inquire about getting them for my patients who were also looking for relief. They were really helpful in making these easily available and they had several programs designed to support offices who recommend their products. Unfortunately, we do not have room for inventory in our office, so instead I directly refer my patients to the Oofos website. They provide free shipping and returns for my patients and have a much more robust selection than the local stores. Over the past several years, referring patients for Oofos sandals to wear around the house has become an integral part of what I offer my patients. On many occasions, patients have told me that incorporating these into their

regimen is what helped them most. Many patients come back and say they now have several pairs and can't live without them.

Throughout my career, I have always tried my best to give back to the community in one way or another. Since 2017, I have been blessed with the opportunity to participate in a surgical mission to Chulucanas, Peru (a small remote town in a valley of the Morropón Province, Piura). This is a very poor part of Peru where many of the people cannot afford shoes, and many live up in the mountains in homes with dirt floors and no electricity or running water. Each year I



Another view of the Chulucanas Valley

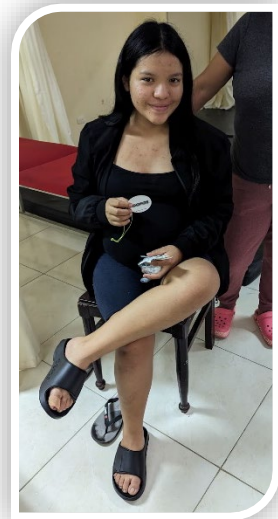
take my fellow with me and we spend the first half of the mission running a clinic, and then the second part doing surgery. Each day runs for about 12-14 hours. Patients are selected through the ministry and prior missions. Some people have waited their whole lives to have foot deformities corrected, including many children who were born with severe foot problems. Many make journeys that take over eight hours through rural and mountainous areas of Peru by walking, long bus rides, or even riding on horses



The complete 2023 surgical team on the Westcoast of Peru, just outside of Piura

or donkeys. Everyone is so kind and grateful when they come to see us. People bring gifts such as pottery and watermelons to thank the medical team. Each trip we see a couple hundred patients in the foot and ankle clinic and perform about 30 surgeries. We have a saying on the mission that whatever we give... we always walk away with so much more. It is truly an amazing opportunity to be a part of so many life changing experiences.

As I prepare for the mission each year, I reach out to several companies to see if they would support the mission with donated supplies. I have fortunately had several thousands of dollars of donations from manufacturers and distributors of surgical equipment which helps us facilitate the surgical component of what we do in Peru. But as I have experienced at home, a big part of foot health comes from what you put on your feet, especially in an unforgiving environment. I decided to reach out to Oofos to see if they would be willing to support our mission efforts. There was no hesitation. Within a few weeks of the request, I received a box with over 50 pairs of slides and sandals. I was blown away. I cannot even begin to explain how great of an addition this was to our mission trip this past year. I can't describe the look on patients' faces when we fitted them with their new Oofos. In a short amount of time, several people came to our clinic and asked for the "special" sandals. We went through our inventory on our first day! To say that these made a big difference would be an understatement. So many happy Peruvian feet and even happier patients. Nothing is more rewarding than putting a smile on your patient's face... and I could truly feel positive energy that seemed to magically resonate



A very happy patient from our first day of clinic. She absolutely loved her new OOFOS slides.

from their feet to their face when they tried on a pair of their new sandals and walked away from clinic with instant relief. As I stated earlier, sometimes the simplest of solutions are the best.

I think that it says a lot about a company and their values when they go out of their way to do things like this, and for me it is so easy to support them. I love recommending Oofos to my patients because they are so comfortable... and all of my patients are fully aware that this particular brand has gone the extra mile to give back. Thank you Oofos for all that you do for my patients both here and in Peru! You have certainly helped me make a difference where it matters most.



Getting ready to ship supplies to Peru. Supplies get shipped every July in preparation for the October surgical mission trip.



A common scene from the early morning streets of Chulucanas, Peru



Sister Mary Jo McGinley's ability to take on the mission was greatly enhanced by her new slides. She was truly limping along until she got her new kicks!



Thank you Oofos for this generous donation to the patients of Chulucanas, Peru!



My current fellow, Dr. Tyler Rodericks, explains what is going on with patient's feet. I know it is hard to tell, but on the x-ray each foot has 6 toes.



On the path to recovery. The medical team and family surround one of the many children we operated on to fix a congenital deformity of her foot.