

HEALTH & FITNESS

Back problems may be caused by misaligned feet

Evolving technology has given clinicians a window to help people do something many of us take for granted: put one foot in front of the other.

It's called gait analysis and it refers to a range of methods used to assess what is happening inside your body when you walk. The variety of technology ranges from laboratories where a person is monitored with multiple television cameras that make three-dimensional tiny measurements of motion to basic home videos. The intent is to compile enough information from different sources to determine where biomechanical aberrations exist.

Gait analysis began with taking photographs of people walking. Today, gait is analyzed with computerized technologies. This method is based on digital forceplate assessment, where a person steps across the plate and the computer provides a picture of the way the feet hit the ground by showing different pressure points which are represented by differing colours.

This shows the reactive forces between the floor and the feet. As well, a motion picture is reviewed to calculate measurements such as velocity, stride time and body symmetry.

Everything changes once the foot hits the ground and if the feet are not functioning correctly, then compensation must occur elsewhere causing pain and discomfort in the musculoskeletal system.

A normal foot will strike on the outside of the heel, roll in and then back out slightly for the toe-off. If your foot is aligned as it should be during the toe-off, the bones and ligaments tighten. But any misalignment at this moment shifts the burden of support to the muscles, tendons and ligaments along your lower legs and knees, hips and lower back.



Foot problems lead to pain elsewhere in the body.

HOW TO BE SURE THE SHOE FITS

Measure first. The ligaments and tendons in your feet relax with time, causing them, in effect, to grow. Start by standing on a brannock device (found in most shoe stores) with your full weight. Measure from the heel to longest toe.

Buy fat. According to the American Orthopedic Foot and Ankle Society, almost nine out of 10 women wear shoes that are too narrow or too small.

This article was submitted by Back In Shape Chiropractic in Markham.

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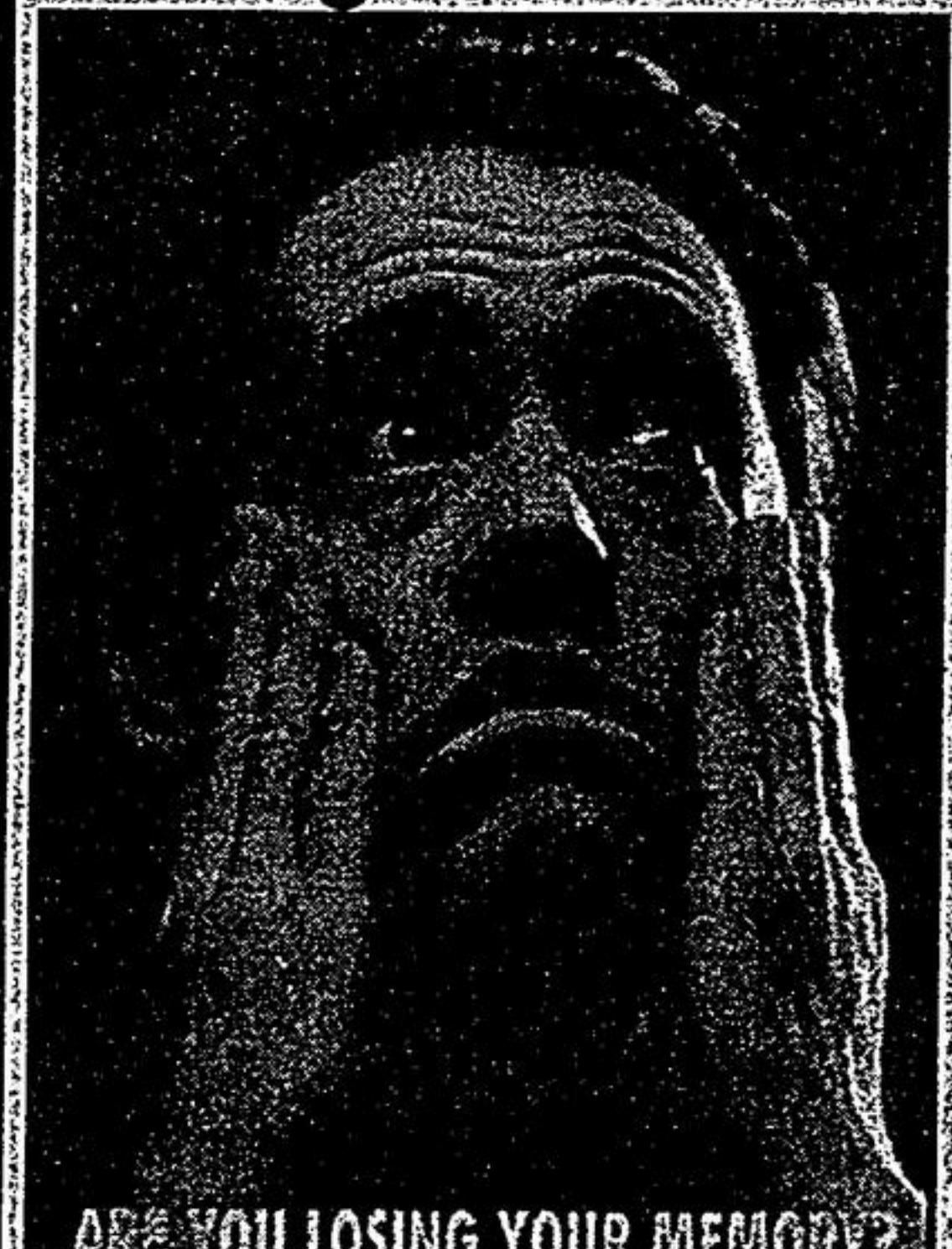
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