

## What Supports the Medial Arch

By Ben Benjamin, PhD

**Question:** Which ligament primarily is responsible for holding the foot back from pronation as we walk?

**Answer:** The spring ligament.

The spring ligament, which attaches the calcaneus to the navicular bone, gives resilience and "spring" to our step as we walk.

It also limits the amount of pronation in the foot.

When we walk, the lateral aspect of the heel strikes the ground first. We then roll forward and medially through the foot until we push off with the three medial toes to take a step. As this rolling movement happens, the spring ligament cushions the foot from excessive stress by providing elasticity in the arch; the ligament gives a little bit, but at the same time restricts the amount of pronation. The spring ligament works together with the four deltoid ligaments at the medial ankle to hold the arch of the foot in place.

Extreme pronation of the foot results when the spring ligament is permanently overstretched, allowing the medial arch to collapse. This condition can be congenital, or can result from poor alignment or an accident of some kind. Individuals with this condition might benefit from orthotics designed to support the medial arch, or from work with an Alexander teacher or Feldenkrais practitioner to improve their body alignment.

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