
Foot and Ankle: An Introduction

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The Ilizarov method has revolutionized the field of orthopedics promoting bony union, eradicating osteomyelitis, correcting deformity, and lengthening osseous tissues. Furthermore, this method introduced advanced soft tissue handling and a minimally invasive approach to complex surgery. Of all the subspecialties impacted by this method, the field of foot and ankle surgery has, arguably, benefitted the most. Prior to the arrival of the Ilizarov method, amputation was the primary solution to the threatened limb because there was no other option. Now with the tools for limb salvage, we can discuss amputation versus salvage based on duration, cost, and final function. This innovation of stable, minimally invasive fixation and control over the gradual movement of bone fragments has encouraged surgeons to rethink their approach to complex

orthopedic problems. Part of the challenge all surgeons face is to question the treatment pathways that have been engrained in our training and practices and to embrace new technology and incorporate it into our treatment options. The following section will show complex foot and ankle pathology that has been remedied using the Ilizarov method. Case examples will be presented that chronicle the effective use of this method in specific scenarios that we may encounter in our practices. Our authors represent a multinational group of experts brought together by their dedication to problem solving and implementation of the Ilizarov method. These cases will serve to convince the doubtful, instruct the curious, and inspire the converted toward further innovation.

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