

## Hand Painted

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I recently returned from speaking at a seminar in Holland. It was a great trip and seminar with wonderful people, great chiropractors and a lovely country. Our host, Dr. Jos van den Hoek, is a true champion of chiropractic in Holland. Once the seminar was over, we had one day for sightseeing and buying a few souvenirs. I asked my wife if there was anything she was particularly interested in; she gave me a few ideas and then mentioned [Delft Pottery, a white pottery with blue enamel painting](#). It originated in Delft, Holland in the early 1600s. The modern version is named Delft Blauw or Delft Blue. She then said, "But that can be expensive." Well, after 27 years of marriage, I know how to take a hint.

On the day of our sightseeing trip, it was apparent that Delft Blue was everywhere - or at least I thought it was. Our host's wife, Jennifer, was quick to point out that much of it was not authentic. She showed me the difference in colors of the real and not-so-real Delft Blue. She also showed me that each piece (plate, Christmas ornament, tea pot, etc.) was signed and specifically labeled.

Most of the fake Delft Blue was advertised as "hand painted." Jennifer told me that to qualify as hand painted, the item need only have received one stroke from a paint brush. There's truth in advertising for you! The quality differences in the true Delft Blue and the fake version are what make the authentic Delft Blue valuable and collectible. The knowledge helped, and I eventually selected a nativity set for my wife.

In addition to the intended sights and souvenirs, there was one surprise sight, a sporting goods store. The store was unique to me; it had a large display in the window of a foot scanner for orthotic fitting. The scanner resembled the ones we are now seeing advertised on American television. A company known for making a comfort orthotic is employing scanners in department and drug stores. The ads show customers having their feet scanned. The scanner screen then recommends a "custom fitted" orthotic for that person. This is a bit amusing to me. There is no history taken or examination performed by a doctor, nor does a doctor read the scan, yet the "custom" orthotic is already in a box hanging from the scanner display.

I've always understood custom to mean "made to specific specifications" or "made to order." How can something be "custom" when it's already sitting on the shelf? Sure, there are a few styles to pick from; but really, how could *all* of the people in America have only a few different types of feet? Even my identical twin sons have differences in their feet. Having 15 to 20 different styles of "custom" would be like a drug store only having 15 to 20 drugs to dispense, regardless of the patient or condition. That would be ridiculous!

There is more variation in the sizes (shoe sizes) of the orthotics than there are differences in "corrections and supports" in these drug store scanner orthotics. And are those "corrections and supports" really corrections and supports? They appear to be *comfort* products, not *custom* health care products.

I cannot help but compare their claim of "custom fitted" to the claim of "hand painted" by the sellers of the fake Delft Blue. Why would a patient want an orthotic with a single brush stroke

when they could have a true "hand painted" orthotic? Without the specific knowledge I gained on my Holland trip, I would not have known the difference between an authentic Delft Blue piece and a fake. Likewise, patients cannot tell the difference between a true custom orthotic and an orthotic of lesser quality that is said to be custom. Imparting this knowledge is the doctor's responsibility, and it is the vital part missing in the department and drug store scanners. Additionally, the scanners in stores cannot examine for pathologies or biomechanical alterations above the feet. They cannot give proper break-in advice, nor will they be able to follow up with the patient as is required.

How did my wife like the nativity set? She loved it; however, I was mortified. While I was telling her how to tell the difference between the authentic and fake Delft Blue, I turned the manger over and discovered it was not signed. The one I had looked at in the store was signed. I had asked for one in a box for travel purposes.

Despite this, my wife still says she likes it, and at least we know this now instead of my kids finding out when they inherit it someday. Oh well, that will teach me not to trust the one already in the box.

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