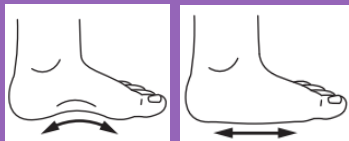
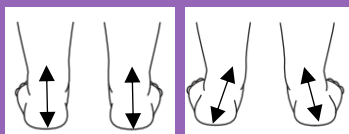


1. What are flat feet?

Flat feet or Pes planus refers to a foot which does not have an arch on the inside of the foot in standing.



When a child has flat feet it will make the heels look like they are rolling inwards.



2. How common are flat feet?

Most babies, toddlers and children have "flat feet".

Flat Feet are considered as part of normal development up to the age of 8yrs [9].

We refer to this as "normal variant".

Flat feet are present in 54% of 3yr olds, 26% of 6yr olds and 19% of adults [9].

In the absence of symptoms, adults with flat feet are also 'normal'

3. What causes flat feet?

Flat feet in children are felt to be as a result of;

- Bone formation.
- Ligamentous Laxity.
- Increased adipose tissue (infants have a fat pad on the inside of the foot which hides the developing arch).
- Immature neuromuscular control. [10-11]

Foot posture develops over the first 10yrs of life as children grow, develop gross motor skills and control and become stronger [12].

4. Types of flat feet.

Flexible flat feet –

Arches are present in sitting, develop when a child rises onto their tip toes and when you extend the big toe (Jacks Test). {Link to how to assess}

Fixed Flat Feet –

On rare occasions, children will not develop an arch when they rise onto their tip toes or when performing the Jack Test.

This is called a fixed flat foot and should be referred directly to Orthopaedics.

8. When to Refer?

In some cases, it will be appropriate to refer children on for further assessment. i.e If there are concerns over a fixed flat foot or if a child has a flexible flat foot and they complain of regular pain

Please refer to the East Lancashire Paediatric Physiotherapy Referral guidance for management of Flat Feet (Pes Planus) for information on when it is appropriate to refer, and which service you should refer to.

7. What advice should I give?

Reassure parents / guardians it is normal for children to have flat feet. Making unnecessary referrals increases patient / parental anxiety and expectations.

Direct them to the East Lancashire Paediatric website for advice and information on.

- Choosing the right footwear.
- Walking barefoot indoors, on grass, sand and uneven ground.

6. Treatment of flat feet

Flexible flat feet in children do not require treatment.

There is no evidence that asymptomatic flat feet in children lead to later lower limb or back problems.

For the majority of children having flat feet is their 'normal'

Exercises or shoe inserts (arch supports) will not make an arch develop, in fact they can prevent the arch forming by preventing the muscles and neuromuscular control of the foot developing.



Flat Feet / Pes Planus.

A guide for referrers