

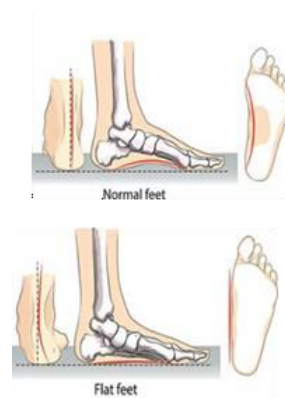
Normal Variants

Paediatric Management Advice Leaflet

Flat Feet

What is flat foot?

Most adult feet have an arch along the inside edge of the foot. Flat foot is when this arch is absent or reduced in standing. Most children are born with very little arching in the feet. As they grow and walk, the soft tissues along the bottom of the feet tighten, which gradually shapes the arches of the feet. Children with flexible flat foot often do not begin to develop an arch until the age of 5 years or older, and the foot arch is not fully developed until around 10 years of age. Some children never develop an arch.



Will my child need treatment?

If your child does not have any associated problems with their flat feet then they are unlikely to need treating. Many people have a long standing belief that flat feet are abnormal and require treatment with special shoes, insoles or even splints or braces, which is untrue.

Children between 1-10 years of age can have flat feet. This is normal and their arches develop over their childhood as their muscles become stronger.

Over 95% of children grow out of their flat feet and develop a normal arch by the age of 8. Most children with a persistent flat foot participate in physical activities including competitive sports, and experience no pain or other symptoms and require no intervention or insoles. Evidence states we only provide insoles after aged 8, if they have pain and other associated problems linked to flat feet.

Footwear

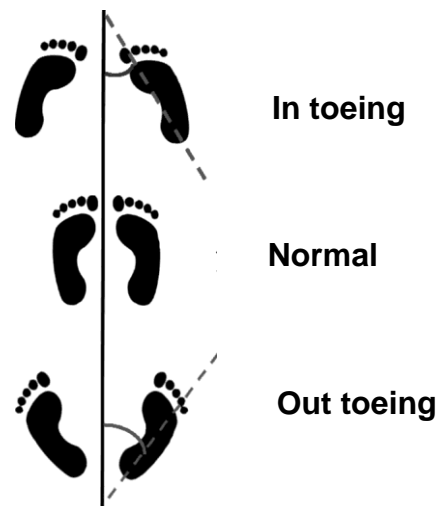
Supportive footwear is always recommended for your child's feet when outdoors. It is recommended that indoors your child walks barefoot as this helps to develop muscles in their feet.



In Toeing and Out Toeing

What is In Toeing/Out Toeing?

A child is said to have an in toeing gait when he/she walks with the feet turned inwards - this can also be referred to as 'Pigeon toed'. A child is said to have an out toeing gait when their feet turn outwards. This can be normal as we all have different walking patterns.



Will my child need treatment?

Orthopaedic surgeons tend to recommend a wait-and-see approach for young children. The expectation is that the degree of in toeing/out toeing will decrease over time and have corrected itself by the age of 8-10 years. Research has found that walking does often improve over time.

Avoid your child habitually sitting in a 'W' position. In this position the knee joints are forced into extreme degrees of outwards rotation. This can contribute to an in toeing / out toeing gait.



An exercise program to improve the weakness and tightness of the hip muscles can improve not only the degree of in toeing/out toeing in standing and walking, but also improve the child's ability to perform gross motor tasks that involve walking, running, balance and jumping.

Exercises that can help



Balancing on one leg

Practice balancing on one leg for up to 1 minute, concentrating on keeping your weight on the outside of your foot and your arch lifted off the floor.

To make this exercise harder. Repeat this exercise with your eyes closed, standing on a pillow / cushion, balancing whilst throwing and catching a ball.

Exercises continued



Toe Raises

Stand holding onto the wall. Rise up onto your tip toes. Repeat 10 times. Complete 3 times per day.

Heel Raises

Stand with your back against the wall. Lift your toes up off the floor so you are resting on your heels. Repeat 10 times. Complete 3 times per day.

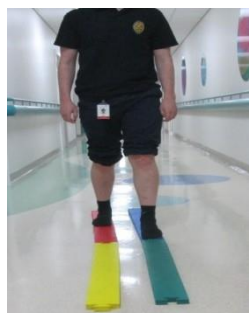


Tip Toe Walking

Practice walking up and down balancing on your tip toes for 30 seconds. Complete 3 times per day.

Heel Walking

Practice walking up and down balancing on your heels, without your toes touching the floor for 30 seconds. Complete 3 times per day.



Walking along tracks

Practise walking in a straight line with feet pointing forwards and hip width apart. Complete 3 times per day.

Exercises continued

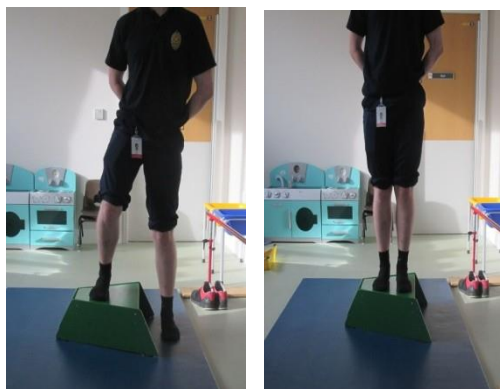


ITB stretch

Lie on your back, with one knee straight, bend the other hip and knee and cross it over the straight leg. Apply a downwards pressure on the bent knee. Hold for 30 seconds. Repeat 3 times on each leg. Complete 3 times per day.

Step ups

Practise stepping up onto the bottom step of your stairs, focussing on placing your heel down first. Then step up with your other leg. Make sure there is a gap in between your knees as you step up and down. Repeat leading with each leg 15 times. Complete 3 times per day.



Side Step-ups

Repeat the previous exercise, this time stepping sideways onto the bottom step. Repeat leading with each leg 15 times. Complete 3 times per day.

Hip Strengthening

Position yourself on all fours with your hands under your shoulders and knees under your hips. Slowly lift one of your legs off the floor and straighten it out behind you. Hold it for 10 seconds before slowly lower it back down. Repeat 10 times on each leg. Complete 3 times per day.



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