

Flat Feet: Information for parents

Introduction

A flat foot is when the inside of the foot (the arch) appears reduced or absent in standing. The arch often "reappears" when sitting with the weight off the foot.

Before the age of 3 years, most children naturally have flat feet. The arch only starts to develop around this age. Flat feet may occasionally be a risk factor for lower limb pain, but this differs in individuals and often has multiple causes.

Introduction

- Unless your child experiences pain, current research indicates no treatments such as insoles or exercises are required
- The arches of your child's foot should start to develop around the age of three to four years. By around seven or eight years the foot arch should have completed most of its development
- There is a normal variation in arch height across the population, as illustrated.



What can I do?

Correct footwear is important for any child to ensure support during periods of growth and development.

Insoles (technically called orthoses) are sometimes prescribed by a podiatrist but are not a 'cure' for flat feet. The aim is to reduce symptoms by improving foot function. There is no evidence they can change the foot shape.

Stretching and strengthening lower leg muscles can often improve symptoms.



Standing on one leg. To make it harder close your eyes or play games such as throwing and catching a ball.



Leaning forward against the wall, stretch your heels towards the floor. You should feel a stretch in the back of your calves. Hold for 30 seconds, repeat 5 times.

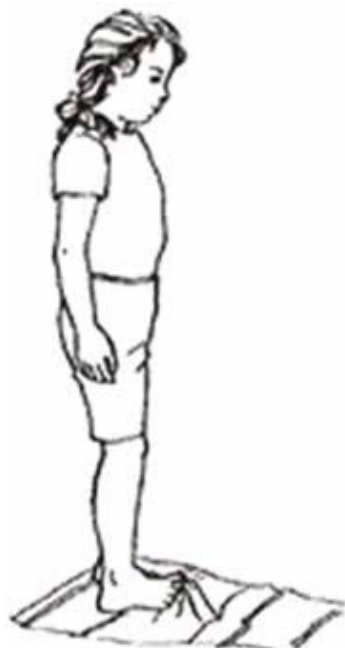
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What can I do? (contd)

Standing or sitting.

Crumple a paper or thin piece of material with your toes by bending and straightening your toes.

Repeat with other foot.



If pain persists or you are concerned there has been no change in your child's condition you may want to discuss this further with your Podiatrist, GP or physiotherapist.

Reference

PhysioTools Ltd. A PhysioTools Compatible Collection. Produced by PhysioTools. 1998 (www.physiotools.com)

See also Gloucestershire Care Services NHS Trust 'First Shoes' (FS 44) factsheet.

Contact Us

Gloucestershire Podiatry Service
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Call: 0300 421 6980
Monday to Friday, 9am to 12pm
(excluding Bank Holidays)
For 0-16 years (or 16-19 in full-time education)

Your experience

Your views are important to us. If you need advice or have feedback on a community hospital in Gloucestershire, or on our community health or adult social care services, you can contact one of the advisers from our service experience team. All enquiries are completely confidential.

You can contact us between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday.

This leaflet can also be supplied in braille, audio format, PDF, large print, easy-read and other languages on request.

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