

Fact Sheet

Toe Walking

What is Toe Walking?

Toe walking (equinus gait) refers to a gait pattern where a child walks on their toes or balls of feet, without putting much if any weight through the heel or any other part of the foot.

Toe walking in toddlers is common under the age of 3, if they are just beginning to learn how to walk and if everything else is normal.



Most cases are just a habit and the child will outgrow it, however, if a child continues to toe walk they should be assessed by a podiatrist as it can be a sign of a condition that needs further investigation (especially if the ankle joint range of motion is limited).

Causes

- **Habitual** - where the cause is unknown but the child is physically able to stand flat footed, they just prefer to walk on their toes.
- **Congenitally short or contracted Achilles Tendon**
- **Neuromuscular conditions** (i.e. Cerebral Palsy, muscular dystrophy, leg length differences, spinal cord abnormalities).
- **Autism** - there is a link between toe walking and autism. Further assessment is indicated (if this is suspected).
- **Hypersensitivity or sensory complications**

Treatment

All cases of toe walking should be evaluated to rule out the causes other than just habit. If the toe walking is more severe or persistent, then treatment consideration may be given to:

- Stretching and Massage
- Casting or Night Splints
- Botox injections
- Surgery



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Podiatry

ALWAYS CONSULT A TRAINED PROFESSIONAL

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