

PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND A/D

Information leaflet for children who walk on their toes



Toe walking is when a child walks on the balls of their feet, with little or no contact between the heels and the floor.

Toe walking can be a normal part of development and is common in children who are just beginning to walk, most children bring their heels down once they have learned to balance.

Most children after the age of 3 will stop toe walking and begin to walk with a normal heel-toe walking pattern.

In most cases, toe walking isn't a cause for concern and does not require treatment.

There are a number of reasons why children might walk on their toes after the age of 3. The most common reason is habitual, which may be called "idiopathic toe walking". This is when a child walks on their toes for no known medical reason, but most children usually stop toe walking around the time they get to secondary school age.

Some children walk on their toes for sensory reasons and physiotherapy input will not change that.

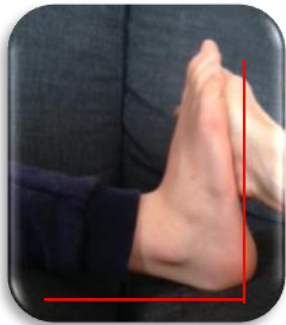
The habit of toe walking is difficult to stop, constantly reminding your child to put their heels down **will not** help them stop toe walking.

If your child is able to stand with their heels flat on the floor and squat with their heels down, then they have good ankle movement and physiotherapy treatment is not required.

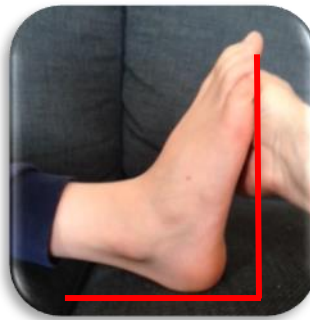
When is a physiotherapy assessment required?

- **If the child experiences pain trying to stand with their heels down**
- **If the child gets pain while walking**

- **If the child walks on their toes on one foot only**
- **If the child can't stand still wearing their shoes**
- **If the child stops being able to walk with their heels down**
- **If toe walking stops them doing any of their daily activities**



Good ankle movement (over 90°)



Reduced ankle movement (less than 90°)



Normal heel-toe walk



If the child can keep the heels down whilst squatting then he / she has good ankle movement.

Some activities for strengthening your legs are: walking on uneven ground including slopes, trampolining, kicking legs in the pool, cycling, walking along a line / stepping stones etc, standing on one leg eg kicking a ball.

An information video on toe walking can be found on the link below, along with activities to help develop physical skills:

<https://abuhb.nhs.wales/hospitals/a-z-of-services/physiotherapy/physiotherapy-for-children-adults-with-learning-disabilities/children-adults-with-learning-disabilities-advice-exercises/>

If you still have concerns about your child after reading this information then do not hesitate to contact us via a "Request for help" form found on <https://children.movebettergwent.nhs.wales> or visit your GP for a referral to Physiotherapy.

**This document is available in Welsh /
Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg**