

Paediatric Physiotherapy

Toe Walking Information for Parents and Carers



What is Toe Walking?

Many children walk on their toes and this can be a normal part of their development. It occurs when a child's heel makes little or no contact with the ground during walking and standing. It is more common for children under the age of 3, but some children can continue this up to the age of 6 or 7 years. It usually resolves naturally, however a small number of children may continue to walk this way as they get older. Toe walking can sometimes be seen in several members of the family.

You may find that a child who toe walks may be more wobbly on their feet, have a tendency to walk fast or run or fall over more frequently.

What causes toe walking?

The exact cause is unknown but in some cases is due to habit of walking on their toes from a young age. Also some children like the sensation of being of their toes or dislike the sensation of their feet touching the floor.

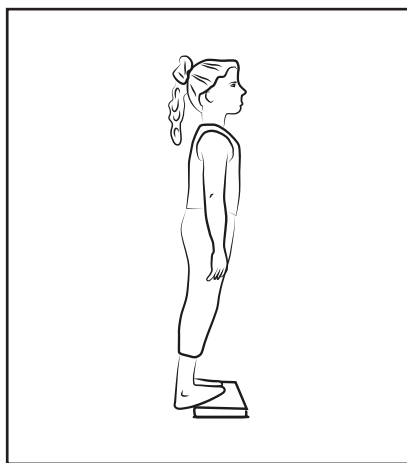
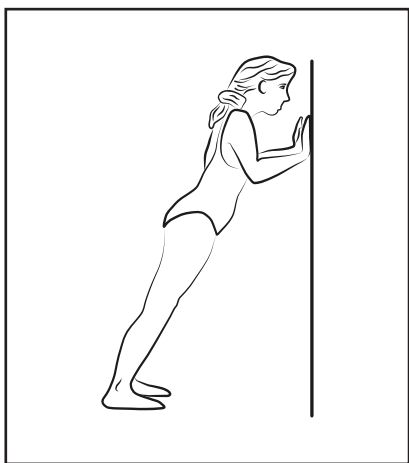
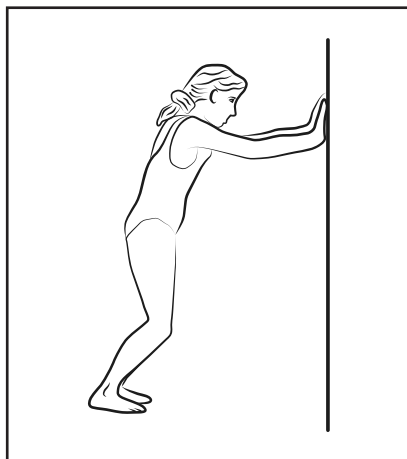
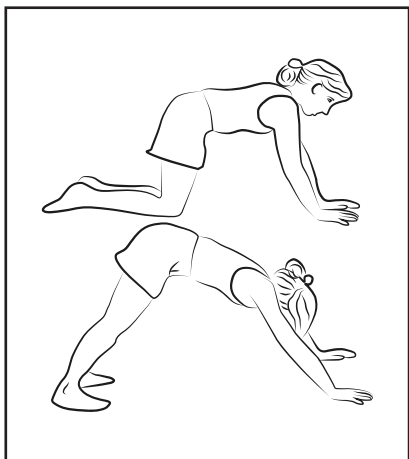
In some cases children can have short calf muscles, causing the child to lift their heels up when walking to make it more comfortable.

Activities which can help stretch out the calf muscles

Backwards walking, walking on heels, walking on a straight line, keeping feet flat when walking up and down stairs and slopes, squatting down to play and keeping heels down and walking on uneven surfaces.

The stretches on the next page can also be helpful, as can supportive and well-fitting footwear. Please see link for footwear advice: https://apcp.csp.org.uk/system/files/choosing_footwear_for_children_2016.pdf

Exercises



When to seek help

Physiotherapy may be useful in cases where your child cannot walk or stand with their heels flat on the ground, cannot squat down while keeping their heels on the ground, is only up on their toes on one side or is complaining of pain in their foot/feet/leg(s).

Acorn Centre Child Health Office Suite Vale of Leven Hospital, Main St, Alexandria G83 0UA Tel: 01389 817246	Aranthruie Centre 103 Paisley Road Renfrew PA4 8LH Tel: 0141 314 8995
Bridgeton Child Development Centre 201 Abercromby Street Glasgow G40 2DA Tel: 0141 531 6554	The Gorbals Health and Care Centre 2 Sandiefield Road Glasgow G5 9AB Tel: 0141 201 5030
North West Glasgow The West Centre and Woodside 60 Kinfauns Drive Glasgow G15 7TS Tel: 0141 207 7100	Skylark Centre Inverclyde Royal Hospital Larkfield Road Greenock PA160XN Tel: 01475 505198