

FACT SHEET

Toe Walking

What is toe walking?

Toe walking is a condition that can occur in childhood where the child walks on their toes, placing little weight on the heel or any other part of the foot and usually there is no associated pain.

Children commonly will walk on their toes, especially when they are learning to walk between the ages of 10 to 18 months with some children continuing to walk on their toes until they are 2 or 3 years of age. If a child continues to toe walk after the age of 3 or if they start to toe walk later in life, or only one leg is affected, then further assessment is recommended. A physiotherapist skilled in assessing children's overall mobility can be very helpful in establishing whether a gait pattern is a variation of the normal or a cause for concern.

Common causes

Toe walking may be caused by a variety of reasons; it may be due to muscle or nerve problems, development delay/disabilities or simply habitual and idiopathic.

An assessment by a physiotherapist will confirm this and suggest appropriate treatment if required.

Treatment

Treatment will depend on the age of the child, the severity and the cause of their toe walking. Methods of treatment may include stretching exercises, massage, and activities to encourage the heels to the floor, supportive footwear or further assessment of their motor skills and function if required.

