

Flexible Flatfoot in Children

When children with flexible flatfoot try standing, the arch in the foot ends up disappearing. Whenever children stand on their tiptoes or sit, the arch ends up reappearing. The condition is actually quite common in children. Many parents and other family members will worry about an absent or abnormally low arch in the foot of the child, or the belief that it will lead to permanent disabilities or deformities. However, the condition is often painless and doesn't interfere with participating in sports or walking. Most of the time, children end up growing out of the condition without having to worry about any problems.

Flexible Flatfoot in Children Anatomy

Flexible flatfoot is a variation of the normal foot. Joints and muscles of the flexible flatfoot will often function normally. Most children tend to be born with only a slight arch in their feet. As they walk and grow, the soft tissues running along the bottom part of the feet will end up tightening, which will slowly shape the arch of the feet.



Children who have this condition often don't begin developing an arch until they are at least five years old. Some children don't ever develop an arch. If the condition continues into adolescence, children can experience an aching pain running along the bottom part of the foot. Doctors should be consulted when your child's flatfeet are causing pain.

How to Treat Flexible Flatfoot in Children:

1. Stretching Exercises

If the child has any pain related to activity or a tiredness in the ankle, foot or leg, they might need to perform stretching exercises for the Achilles tendon. Your therapist can advise you further.

2. Shoe Inserts

If the pain and discomfort continues, the doctor might recommend the use of shoe inserts or orthotics. Hard, firm and soft-molded arch supports might relieve the pain and fatigue in the foot. They also serve to extend the life of the child's shoes, which might end up wearing unevenly.

3. Surgery

Surgical treatment is rare but might be needed for a child suffering with persistent pain. In small amounts of children, flexible flatfeet can end up becoming rigid instead of correcting themselves with growth. The cases might require further evaluation with a medical professional. Surgery should always be the last case scenario and only considered an option if the foot is causing significant pain or disability.

Tips:

- Flatfoot might be an inherited condition, so you need to let the doctor if someone in the family has the condition.
- The doctor or therapist should examine the child's regular shoes for patterns of wear.
- The child's Achilles tendon will be examined for tightness and look for calluses on the bottom of the feet.
- To make an accurate diagnosis, the doctor will examine the child to rule out other types of flatfeet requiring treatment.
- If your child has any muscular or neurological diseases, make sure to let the doctor know. Many neurological problems with the brain and spinal cord can cause the feet to flatten.