

Pes Planus

Pes planus literally means “flat foot”. Pes planus occurs when the arches in the feet seem to disappear whenever the foot contacts the ground. As the arch vanishes, the ankle ends up rolling inward, which is referred to as pronation.

The condition tends to be quite common in children. Just about every baby will be born with flat feet. More than four in every 10 children who are ages 3-6 or older will have flat feet. As children grow older, the condition often resolves or improves as the ligaments and muscles within the arch tighten and mature. By the time children are six, one out of every four children will have flat feet, while about one out of every seven will continue having the condition as an adult. The condition can run in families.

It is also common amongst certain ethnic groups, with Africans commonly showing naturally flat feet.

Pes Planus Anatomy

The feet are full of flexible structures consisting of bones, muscles, joints and soft tissues that allow you to stand upright and perform activities such as running, walking and jumping. Three sections make up the feet:

- The forefoot contains five longer bones and five toes.
- The midfoot is a collection of bones forming arches in the feet. These include three cuneiform bones, the navicular bone and the cuboid bone.
- The hind foot is composed of the ankle and the heel. The talus bone supporting the leg bones form the ankle. The heel bone is the largest out of all the bones in the foot.

Tendons, muscles and ligaments run along the surface of the feet, which allows all of the complex movements that are needed to maintain balance and motion. The Achilles tendon connect the calf muscle to the heel, which is essential for jumping, running and being able to stand on your toes.

How to Treat Pes Planus:

1. Children Eight or Younger

In children who are eight years old or younger, observation is often the recommended course of treatment. Just leave it and see if the child develops out of it.

2. Middle or High School Children

Firstly, some therapists and doctors believe that nothing should be done, and feel that it's just a natural course of progression for a child. However, Children who are suffering from pain due to the condition might need to use orthotics to help support the arch of the foot and minimize the amount of pronation occurring.

Remember, shoe inserts aren't going to change the shape of the foot or give you arches as the child ages, but they can provide you with comfort and support.

3. Therapy

Manual and physiotherapists will prescribe exercises to strengthen the arch of the foot. They will also help with any foot pain.

4. Surgery

Surgery to put an implant into the foot isn't recommended in children. The procedure is quite complex and requires a great deal of time to heal. It is often reserved for those who are in extreme pain that isn't responding to conservative treatment methods such as inserts and strengthening and stretching exercises. Surgery is often not recommended.

Tips:

- Wear shoes that have low heels and wide toes to prevent placing an undue amount of pressure on your feet.
- If you are overweight, try losing a few pounds to alleviate pressure on the feet.
- Do exercises that help to strengthen the muscles in the foot. Talk to your RMP therapist.



- Since shoes can limit movement, walking barefoot might be a good option for you whenever possible.