Podiatry Services
Patient Information Leaflet

Toe Walking in Children
(V2 November 2026)

What is toe walking?
Toe walking is when a child stands or walks mainly on their toes. This can be normal when a child learns to walk and they should quickly grow out of it as a toddler. A small number of children will continue to toe walk as they get older.

What problems may occur?
Children might have no symptoms other than walking on their toes. Children may, experience pain or discomfort, be more wobbly on their feet, have a tendency to walk fast or run, or fall over more frequently

What causes it?
Habit: Children may get used to walking on their toes, creating a habit. Over time this can cause muscle tightness in their calf muscles.

Weak trunk muscles: Children may walk on their toes to improve their balance if their tummy, back and bottom muscles are weak. Short calf muscles Children may be unable to get their heels to the floor secondary to tightness in the calf muscles. This can sometimes follow a growth spurt but can result from habitual toe walking over longer periods of time.

Autistic spectrum disorders: Toe walking can be associated with autism. It is less likely that podiatry management will resolve this form of toe walking long term.

What can I do to help?
Treatment will depend on each child's presentation. Giving children time to grow out of toe walking is usually the first option.

- **Prompting**
  As children get older, try prompting them to walk slowly and practise heel-toe walking.
- **Calf Stretching**
  If your child's calves become tight, daily calf stretching can help to ensure your child can still stand with their feet flat to the ground.
- **Assisted Calf Stretching**
  Have your child lie down with their knee straight. Support the ankle and push the foot upwards. They should feel a stretch in the back of their leg. Hold for 30 secs. Repeat 4 times each leg.

- **Independent Calf Stretching**
  Place one-foot forwards and one back with both feet facing forwards. Bend your front knee and keep your back knee straight. Keep your heels on the ground and push into the wall. Hold for 30 secs Repeat 4 times each leg.

- **Footwear**
  Wearing a stiffer soled shoe or ankle boot that doesn't bend too easily will encourage your child to walk with their heels down easier.

If problems persist or are having an effect on your child further help maybe required through Podiatry or Physiotherapy

If you have any questions about the information in this leaflet, please contact Podiatry Services. Further information about the service and how to manage a range of foot health problems yourself, can also be found on our website:
www.livewellsouthwest.co.uk/project/podiatry

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