

Flat Feet (Pes Planus)

People with flat feet have a very low foot arch or no arch at all. The soles of their feet lay flat on the ground and the feet may point outward when standing or walking.

Pes planus, normally referred to as flat feet, is a common foot type variation that most people experience no pain or problems with. However, because flat feet can affect the body's alignment, the condition can eventually contribute to or exacerbate other foot problems.

Causes of flat feet

Having flat feet during childhood is normal because the arches only develop with age; however, some people simply never develop arches. Arches can also "fall" over time. Fallen arches are caused by everything from pregnancy to normal wear and tear. Overuse of the tendon supporting the arch also causes the foot to flatten.

Risk factors for flat feet include:

- Arthritis.
- Family history (flat feet tend to run in families).
- Foot abnormalities.
- Other medical conditions (including cerebral palsy and muscular dystrophy).
- Pregnancy.
- Weak arches.

Signs of flat feet

Standing upright, people with flat feet have little or no space between the ground and the soles of their feet.

People with flat feet also tend to roll their feet to the inside when standing or walking. Because of this, you can sometimes tell if you have flat feet by looking at a pair of your used running shoes. Flat feet will cause more wear on the inside of the shoe soles near the heel, and the shoe will easily rock side to side.

Treatment of flat feet

Flat feet will not necessarily produce any problems, but if you are experiencing pain in the inner side of the ankle or in the foot period, your flat feet may be to blame.

Most foot pain can be remedied with orthotics. For example, insoles can quickly relieve pressure from the arch releasing some tension caused by flat feet. Your doctor may also recommend inserting a wedge along the inside edge of the shoe to reduce pressure on the tendon. In rare cases, the tendon along the arch can rupture and surgical intervention may be required.

There is no need to be concerned with flat feet unless you are experiencing foot pain or any other foot problems that could be aggravated by flat feet. See a doctor if you have any questions about how flat feet may be affecting any other foot conditions you suffer from.