

Children's Physiotherapy Service

0300 330 5777

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Tell us what you think

We want you to be happy with the service you receive from us, but we know that every so often something might go wrong. If you're unhappy with the care you receive or an element of our service, we want to hear from you.

Of course, we also want to hear from you if you're happy with the care you're receiving - it's good to be able to thank the team and let people know they're doing a good job, so if you have a compliment or congratulation, we'd like to hear from you.

If we are unable to resolve your concerns or you would like to take the matter further please contact us at the address below.

Central Court
1 Knoll Rise
Orpington
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bromh.feedback@nhs.net

bromleyhealthcare.org.uk



**Under 5s parent
guide to toe-walking**
Children's Physiotherapy Service
Provided by Bromley Healthcare

The physiotherapy team work collaboratively towards enabling children and young people and their families to manage their own physical health needs, and maximise their physical potential.

Why is my child toe walking?

Between 7 and 24 children out of 100 use a tip-toe gait. This is a normal part of their development. It is more common in boys and it can sometimes be seen in several family members.

When does it occur?

Children aged between 10 and 18 months may learn to walk on tiptoes. Some children continue this up to the age of six or seven, where it usually resolves naturally. However, a small number of children may continue to walk this way, as they get older.

Does it cause pain?

Walking on tiptoes does not usually cause any pain or discomfort and it does not result in any type of deformity. However, it may lead to tightening of the calf muscles and shortening of the achilles tendon, which can lead to your child being unable to put their heel to the ground.

What is the cause of toe-walking?

The cause of toe walking is unknown and is possibly due to habit from a young age. Children usually toe-walk intermittently and can stand and walk with a heel-toe pattern if prompted.

Some tips to follow:

- Avoid using baby-walkers / door bouncers / baby jumping type equipment as these encourage a tiptoe foot posture.
- Any kind of boot type shoe / welly boot makes toe-walking more difficult and may help to break the habit.
- Older pre-schoolers may be more aware of their gait style and can respond to verbal prompts to walk 'heels down'.
- With older pre-schoolers you can try a game of walking on your heels (like a penguin) to help desensitise the feet to weight bearing on heels.

When to seek further advice:

Request a physiotherapy assessment if your child previously walked on their toes intermittently but is now unable to stand or walk with feet flat, and only walks on their tip-toes.

Request a physiotherapy assessment if your child only tiptoes with one foot.

Request a physiotherapy assessment if your child was born before 37 weeks gestation, had low birth weight or Intra-uterine growth retardation with a tip-toe gait.

See your GP if your child seems to be in significant discomfort or has other unexplained symptoms related to toe-walking.

Very rarely tiptoe walking can be part of other neuro-developmental problems. If you have other concerns about your child's development alongside the tiptoe walking, then see your GP for further advice.