

# Flat Feet

Most peoples' feet have a space between the inner side where the bottom of the foot is off the ground – the arch of the foot. The height of this arch varies from one person to another.

A flat foot is a condition in which the foot doesn't have a normal arch in one or both feet. It can also be termed as low arches, no arches, fallen arches or pronation.

The symptoms vary depending on the severity of the condition. Individuals can experience corns and hard skin under the sole of the foot. The arch area is often tender and shoes will tend to wear out quickly. In severe cases, the patients experience calf, knee, hip and back pain.

## Causes

- It may be hereditary, i.e. passed on through generations.
- In most cases it is caused through a biomechanical complaint (abnormality in walking) where the joints in the foot over pronate (rolls in too much).
- A ruptured tendon (tibialis posterior) can also lead to a flat foot.
- Being over weight.

## Treatment

- Wear wide fitting shoes. A full shoe with a lace, or a boot are best.
- Do not try to treat the secondary lesions (i.e. corns) yourself.
- Purchase insoles/orthotics to take pressure and pain away from the arch.

## When to Seek Further Advice

- Shoes wear out quickly.
- Feet cause you a lot of pain and not helped by well fitting shoes, and insoles
- Your foot seems to get flatter.
- Your feet seem very stiff
- You cannot feel your feet normally or they seem weak.

## Shoe Examination

A test to check your foot type and gait is the shoe examination. Assessing the wear and tear on a well worn pair of shoes can indicate whether you are a pronator ( foot rolls in too much) a supinator ( foot rolls out too much) or have a normal gait pattern.

A small amount of shoe wear along the outside boarder at the heel is normal. If the heel of your shoes is worn on the inside edge, you over pronator. Additionally, if the wear pattern shows only wear on the outside edge, you are likely to be a supinator.

## The Wet Foot Test

This is another simple test to find out your foot type. It can be done at home.

All you have to do is wet your feet (after a shower or bath is perfect) and stand on a surface that will leave a visible footprint such as brown paper, or a bed sheet. Your footprint should fall into one of three categories:



Flat foot, possibly pronating



High arch foot, possibly supinating



Normal foot, normal gait

### Flat Foot: The pronator

The pronator type of foot rolls far inward during the weight bearing phase of the stride. This foot type is characterised by a low arch. Heavier people often have feet in this category.

When standing, are both of your kneecaps turned inwards? You may experience knee pain if you are active and involved in sport. Bunions, corns or calluses may occur.

### High Arch Foot: The supinator

The supinator type of foot restricts the impact of the stride largely to the outer edges of the foot. This is often due to very tight structures on the sole of the foot.

### Normal Foot: Normal healthy gait

The neutral type of foot is between the pronator and the supinator types. It is the most common foot type.

## Suggested Products and Where to Buy Them



#### **Mobilis**

Formthotic  $\frac{3}{4}$  Length Dual Density  
[www.mobilishealthcare.com](http://www.mobilishealthcare.com)

01616780233

**Local chemist shops such as Boots will also stock a range of products.**