

Orthopaedic Connection

Take Your Pick: Flat Feet or High Arches

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Transforming patient information into patient understanding.

Parents and Grandparents (especially!) stop worrying when your baby or toddler looks like their feet are flat as a pancake.

Little children have fat pads in their feet that make them look very flat when they stand. A slight arch may appear when the child sits or stands on tiptoes.

It's Normal

Children are born that way and you have nothing to be concerned about. Medically it is referred to as flexible flatfoot.

It is painless and doesn't interfere with a child walking or playing sports.

Most children outgrow it eventually as their feet get larger, their baby fat disappears and their foot muscles strengthen with weight bearing activity such as walking.

Adolescent Foot Pain

Although painless in young children, flatfeet in older children and adolescents can cause an aching pain. Sometimes the pain only occurs during or after sports or other physical activity.

- Sometimes they complain the ankle or leg is tired
- Can have aching pain at night
- Achilles can be red and painful
- Can have callous under the arch
- Flatfeet tendency definitely runs in families

How I Treat It

- If Achilles is tight, heel cord stretches
- Orthotics are custom molded arches
- Made of a composite material
- They support the arch and relieve foot strain and pain
- Orthotics make shoes last longer
- Physical therapy is sometimes used
- Surgery in rare, special cases

High Arch (Pes Cavus)

Just as feet with low arches can cause problems, so can feet with high arches.

A high arch can be seen in children, but usually it is not noticed until older teenage years or as an adult.

High arches are definitely hereditary as are low arches.

High arch people complain of pain with overuse, sports and exercise. High arch feet are not good shock absorbers.

Not as much of the foot touches the ground to provide support for walking.

Treatment

- Off the shelf inserts don't work
- Custom molded orthotics do usually work
- The right shoe to match the orthotic is needed
- Physical therapy is needed on occasion
- Surgery very seldom needed

I think it is good to know something about these two conditions because they are fairly common. Many doctors don't want to have much to do with them. With proper treatment most people with the conditions get along pretty well.

My patients put their trust in me and what I do improves the quality of their lives.

Office Website and Gratiot County Herald Archive

Wow! Your window to the Orthopaedic and musculoskeletal world opens at www.orthopodsurgeon.com. It contains 1) The Website Library of Information 2) Your Orthopaedic Connection 3) GCH Archive of all previous articles.

You will be amazed at all the helpful information it contains.

All of the information pertains to everything I treat in the office and hospital.

Be well. Good health, good life, all the best to you.

Dr. Haverbush